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BOSTON 400 UPDATE

Thomas M. Menino, City of Boston

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Summer 1999

Community partners adopt Boston 400

As Boston 400 held another round of public meetings and distributed information about its longterm planning agenda, the City worked to develop partnerships with community-based groups.

Community partners will work with the Boston Redevelopment Authority, which is coordinating the planning effort, to develop an implementation strategy for the Boston 400 planning agenda.

The BRA expects to release its final report in early 2000. The report will detail a longterm planning agenda and implementation strategies. The report will also contain maps, graphics, and data that will be a useful "tool kit" for Bostonians as they plan their future.

The latest roster of community partners appears on page 2 of this *Boston 400 Update*.

Each of the community partners represents a broad constituency with strong community roots. The partners will work with Boston 400 during the summer to assure that the document is a comprehensive summary of the City's planning priorities for the next generation.

"Boston 400 brings together all the issues we face in the next generation — open spaces, neighborhood revitalization, transportation, and traffic," said Thomas N. O'Brien, Director of the BRA. "And the agenda came from the people who matter the most — the people in the neighborhoods."

Boston 400 recruited the community partners to keep the grassroots focus — and also to involve citywide groups with a longterm commitment to carrying out community priorities.

In the fall of 1999, Boston 400 will take its more detailed agenda to each of the city's neighborhoods for more discussion and input.

"It's important for City Hall to develop a comprehensive agenda, but it's also important that it begins with people all over the city, and that they take ownership of the agenda," said Linda M. Haar, Director of Planning for the BRA. "The community has already told us, in many different ways, that they support these goals. Now the City is going to join forces with our partners to make the goals a reality. With this combination, we will make it happen."

Mayor Thomas M. Menino announced the Boston 400 initiative in 1997. Boston 400 has held close to 200 public meetings in the neighborhoods to discuss planning priorities in the years leading to Boston's 400th anniversary in 2030.

Once completed, the report will be available at all of the City's public libraries, and electronic versions will be produced for the Internet and a CD-ROM.



A Bostonian fishes off of Columbia Point, with the landmark gas tank and the Blue Hills in the background.

Our community partners

Listed below are citywide, grassroots organizations that have agreed to work with the City to ensure that the content of the Boston 400 final report reflects the priorities identified in its community planning process.

Boston is a city of neighborhoods

Dating from their separate histories as independent towns, Boston's neighborhoods have always defined the character of the city. Boston 400 initiatives reinforce the neighborhoods as the fundamental building blocks of Boston's future:

Walkable charm bracelets: Boston GreenSpace Alliance and WalkBoston

Transit-oriented urban villages: Metropolitan Area Planning Council and Conservation Law Foundation

Affordable housing for all: Citizens' Housing and Planning Association

Gateways to the city: National Trust for Historic Preservation

Boston is a vital natural environment

Boston's vitality begins with the protection and enhancement of its priceless natural assets, including parks, waterways, and innumerable public and private places that sustain us all. Boston 400 initiatives address these goals:

Communities connected by water: Save the Harbor / Save the Bay, The Watershed Institute, Charles River Watershed Association, Chelsea Creek Action Group, Muddy River Action Group, Mystic River Watershed Association, and Neponset River Watershed Association

Parks for Boston's commonwealth: Boston GreenSpace Alliance

Investing in our natural environment: Boston GreenSpace Alliance

Playing fields for the next generation: The Center for the Study of Sport and Society at Northeastern University

Protection and management of natural spaces: Boston GreenSpace Alliance

Boston is a cultural and learning center

From the Boston Public Library in Copley Square to Camp Meigs in Hyde Park, Boston provides unparalleled civic, cultural, and historic spaces in every neighborhood of the city. Boston 400 initiatives reinforce these assets:

Schools for the next century: Boston Society of Architects

Art in public places: UrbanArts, Inc.

Historic preservation for community development: Boston Preservation Alliance

Finding your way in the city: WalkBoston

Performance spaces in the neighborhoods: Boston Youth Theater Network

Boston is the economic hub of New England

Boston serves markets far beyond the city limits, as the unofficial capital of New England and a major Atlantic portal to Europe and Latin America. Boston 400 initiatives seek to improve Boston's position as the center of regional transportation and employment:

Hub of the Hub: Boston Society of Architects

A new generation of transit: Move Massachusetts 2000

Designs for development: Boston Society of Architects

Fueling Boston's economic engine: Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce and Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Regional traffic design to protect communities: Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Spring meetings find agreement on basic goals

In a series of meetings at the Boston Public Library and Boston Police Headquarters last spring, residents and others expressed strong support for the priorities outlined in the Boston 400 agenda.

At the meetings, Boston 400 explained the initiatives that fall under the plan's four major themes — Boston as a city of neighborhoods, vital natural environment, economic and transportation hub, and cultural and learning center.

Residents expressed concerns about a number of issues, such as:

- The need for a citywide bicycle network. Boston has a great opportunity over the next generation to build a model system that provides commuting alternatives as well as recreational opportunities.
- Protecting residents from being priced out of their neighborhoods. The City needs to adopt policies that offer a full range of housing choices for all household types all across the city. Building new housing to fill the gaps of the housing supply in all neighborhoods will help to address the displacement that results from gentrification.
- Walking must be at the centerpiece of all planning. Improving the pedestrian atmosphere of Downtown and the neighborhoods is essential to enhancing resi-

dential areas, parks, cultural spaces, and business districts.

- Improved planning around transit stations. Boston should reclaim its position as the nation's premier city for transit-centered neighborhoods. Once transit nodes provide better connections to residents and businesses, people might not need to rely as extensively on car transportation.
 - Full access to the Boston Harbor. Many residents of Boston's neighborhoods are isolated from Boston Harbor and need more extensive and reliable transit.
 - Improving the aesthetic appearance of the neighborhoods. All neighborhoods should offer attractive and comfortable spaces for residents and visitors alike.
 - Improving the extent of Boston's transportation system. Beginning with the Urban Ring — a project that would supplement Boston's radial system with circumferential links — the City needs to lobby for better transit access to all neighborhoods.
 - Protecting neighborhoods from the impacts of regional traffic. The quality of life in Boston's communities must be protected by steering traffic away from pedestrian areas.
- Boston 400 will include all of these ideas in the final document due out at the beginning of 2000.

Other planning initiatives complement Boston 400

As Boston 400 identifies a longterm agenda for the city's next generation, the Boston Redevelopment Authority has undertaken a number of other planning processes.

The latest undertaking is the Roxbury Master Plan. The community and the BRA are evaluating proposals from consultants who will work to develop a comprehensive community development plan in Roxbury. The plan will integrate land-use and transportation planning.

In the early stages of the Boston 400 community process, Roxbury residents asked the BRA to conduct a separate planning process. The BRA has been working with the Roxbury Neighborhood Council and others to outline the scope of this plan to begin in September.

The BRA has also begun a community planning process in the Fenway. Working with community organizations, the BRA will create an interim planning overlay district (IPOD) to coordinate development efforts in the neighborhood.

As part of the Boston 400 process, the BRA is con-



Fenway's Mothers Rest was recently renovated by the Parks Department.

ducting a major study of activity centers around the city. In concert with the MBTA and the City's Transportation Department, more than 50 activity centers will be evaluated for their potential to serve as nodes for a stronger community life. The initiative will devote efforts to enhance land use, urban design, and public transit at the activity centers.

In May, the BRA released the first draft of its East

Boston Master Plan. The East Boston plan contains initiatives to revitalize the waterfront from Chelsea Creek to Boston Harbor, foster a unique network of natural spaces and historic resources, and strengthen business districts and quality of life.

Other City departments are also working on long-term planning projects. The Boston Transportation Department will soon seek public input for its citywide transportation study, and the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, which has been a partner with the BRA on focusing on the natural environment, is working on its five-year plan.

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Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, Massachusetts 02201



Government Documents
Boston Public Library
700 Boylston Street
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Quote / Unquote

"This is a great time for Boston. All over the city, people are working to make their neighborhoods exciting artistically and culturally, as well as vibrant economically. Museums hum, community theater, music and dance groups play to more audiences, and park, waterfront and neighborhood groups are considering how to enhance the artistic appeal of city streets and natural spaces. As the Office of Cultural Affairs begins its planning process to develop a cultural agenda — working with City government, the cultural community and the residents of Boston — our goal is nothing less than a city that is artistically alive wherever you go."

— Esther Kaplan, Special Advisor to the Mayor on Cultural Affairs

What are your thoughts about Boston's challenges for the next generation? Send us brief statements about your hopes and priorities for making Boston a better place to live and work for inclusion in our final report.

Contact Us

Please contact us with questions or comments.

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APR 1 1999

Mayor Thomas M. Menino, City of Boston

Spring 1999

Four Themes Set Outlines of Long-Range Planning

Boston 400 will propose 11 major initiatives for public discussion — organized according to the four qualities that make Boston a vibrant city — in a series of community meetings this spring.

To improve on Boston's four most important qualities — as a city of neighborhoods, a vital natural environment, the hub of New England, and a cultural and learning center — Boston 400 will ask residents and others to continue the planning work begun in more than 150 meetings in neighborhoods across the city in 1997 and 1998.

"Our community meetings provided us with a wealth of information about what matters the most to the neighborhoods and the city," said Thomas N. O'Brien, Director of the Boston Redevelopment Authority. "Boston 400 has tried to translate this grassroots information into citywide initiatives that connect the city and its people."

The initiatives are listed in the centerfold of this edition of *Boston 400 Update*. This spring's community meeting dates are listed on page 4.

In the months ahead, Boston 400 will seek feedback about the major and supporting initiatives from people all across the city.

Implementation requires four basic strategies.

- **Partnerships.** Working on the model of Boston Main Streets, some Boston 400 initiatives would invite neighborhoods to create special partnerships between government and community organizations. Examples of these partnership initiatives include "charm bracelets," transit-oriented urban villages, and public art.

- **Special funding.** On many issues — such as an improved citywide transit system and improvement of the city's systems of parks and natural spaces — the City would need to seek greater spending from state authorities.

- **Strategic use of existing resources.** To get the "biggest bang for the buck," some initiatives would require special planning efforts to coordinate with projects already under consideration. For example, as Boston rehabilitates and rebuilds its schools, Boston 400 aims to set standards for these projects that insure that schools will serve as lifelong learning centers and fit into the

fabric of their communities.

- **Designs for urban life.** Establish and enforce standards and incentives for good urban design. Create new overlay districts for transit and river areas to create a framework for planning and community development.

Connecting the City and Its People, the Boston 400 report to be published this year, will provide wide-ranging information about these initiatives — neighborhood maps, statistics, resources, and other information.

"The point of Boston 400 has always been to foster a citywide conversation about where we need to go in the next generation," said Linda Mongelli Haar, Director of Planning for the BRA. "This report will give us the tools we need to hold this conversation as we move into the next century."



Jamaica Pond is just one of the many places where Bostonians enjoy the city's natural environment.



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An agenda for public discussion

Building on Boston's assets to chart a course to 2030

A city of neighborhoods

Dating from their separate histories as independent towns, Boston's neighborhoods have always defined the character of the City. Three major initiatives and one supporting initiative would reinforce the neighborhoods as the fundamental building blocks of Boston's future:



'Charm bracelets.' Building on the model of the Emerald Necklace, create neighborhood "charm bracelets" throughout the city. Enhance and link parks, civic buildings, neighborhood business districts, historic and cultural spaces, and residential spaces into seamless systems that offer active and passive recreation for residents of every community.

Transit-oriented urban villages. Focus neighborhood residential, business, cultural, and recreational development around strategic transit nodes. Limit parking near transit nodes. Design common spaces – schools, libraries, community centers, churches, health centers, parks – as campuses to encourage broad public use. Make pedestrian and bicycle access the centerpiece of all development.

Affordable housing for all. Develop a comprehensive assessment of housing needs according to housing types and neighborhood. Develop vacant parcels that strengthen the urban setting. Develop housing initiatives that reduce transaction costs and lessen speculation. Establish "rainy day" funds for economic downturns and maintenance.

Supporting Initiative

- **Gateways to the city.** Create attractive gateways for the streets that serve as points of entry to the city from nearby communities.

A vital natural environment

Boston's vitality begins with the protection and enhancement of its priceless natural assets, including parks, waterways, and innumerable public and private places that sustain us all. Two major initiatives and three supporting initiatives address these goals:



Parks for Boston's commonwealth. Complete the restoration of the Emerald Necklace, with pedestrian connections and improvements to Forest Hills T station area, Columbia Road, and Franklin Park and other nearby natural spaces. Strengthen recreation opportunities on major green corridors, including the Charles-to-Charles connection.

Communities connected by water. Enhance connections to the Boston Harbor and Harbor Islands and complete Harborwalk. Using river overlay districts, develop comprehensive strategies to link community enhancement with activity along Boston's five rivers.

Supporting Initiatives

- **Fairground.** Build a citywide fairground to take pressure off the Esplanade, Boston Common, and Franklin Park as venues of festivals and other major events.
- **Protection of natural spaces.** Develop legal and policy strategies to protect natural spaces threatened with development. Assure preservation of and access to natural spaces.
- **Playing fields for the next generation.** Working with the Parks and School Departments and other agencies, develop a citywide system of playing fields that responds to the changing demographics and popularity of sports.

The hub of New England

Boston serves markets far beyond the city limits, as the unofficial capital of New England and a major Atlantic portal to Europe and Latin America. Three major initiatives and two supporting initiatives seek to improve Boston's position as the center of regional transportation and employment:



Hub of the Hub. Enhance the historic corridors and focal points to make downtown more accessible to residents and visitors. Make Central Artery and City Hall Plaza improvements part of a comprehensive public realm plan.

A new generation of transit. Building on a comprehensive transportation analysis, develop new transit lines and convert or extend existing T lines. Complete the Urban Ring and develop connections between the ring and nodes. Strengthen transit access to the city for commuters.

Fueling Boston's economic engine. Building on Boston's position as a center of university and research activity, develop strategically located business incubators. Recruit new manufacturing activity to appropriate parcels. Target firms in early phases of growth to locate and stay in Boston.

Supporting Initiatives

- **Regional traffic that protects communities.** Separate regional and citywide traffic from neighborhood streets. Develop comprehensive parking, commuter transit, and cargo strategies that get goods to market and people to work without threatening neighborhood character.
- **Designs for development.** Adopt and enforce design standards that enhance the overall environment for economic development.

A cultural and learning center

From the Boston Public Library in Copley Square to Camp Meigs in Hyde Park, Boston provides unparalleled civic, cultural, and historic spaces in every neighborhood of the city. Three major initiatives and three supporting initiatives reinforce these assets:



Schools for the next century. Build and rehabilitate schools that create oases of learning for children, provide life-long learning opportunities for all Bostonians, and strengthen the urban character of their neighborhoods. Locate schools at critical community crossroads.

Public art everywhere. Provide incentives for the placement of permanent and temporary displays of public art throughout the city.

Historic preservation for development. Provide incentives for the development of historic buildings and other resources as part of a strategy of community revitalization.

Supporting Initiatives

- **Finding your way in the city.** Develop a comprehensive system of signage. Build on the Mayor's street furniture initiative to assure strong orientation and amenities.
- **Transit to Boston's culture and parks.** Develop transit improvements to help residents and visitors gain better access to cultural and historic resources. Consider special service for weekends, holidays, and tourist season.
- **Performance spaces in the neighborhoods.** Develop multigenerational performance spaces for music and theater in all neighborhoods, using schools when possible.

1990-2030

BOSTON

Connecting the City and Its People



Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, Massachusetts 02201



Government Documents
Boston Public Library
700 Boylston Street
Boston MA 02117

Upcoming community meetings

Boston 400 will hold four community meetings to discuss planning priorities, at the Boston Police Headquarters, located at the corner of Tremont Street and Ruggles Street. Take the Orange line to Ruggles, or take Bus Nos. 8, 15, 19, 22, 23, 28, 42, 43, 44, 45, or 47 to Ruggles Station. Metered parking is also available.

March 22 "Boston as a City of Neighborhoods"

March 29 "Boston as a Vital Natural Environment"

April 5 "Boston as a Cultural and Learning center"

April 12 "Boston as the Transportation and
Employment Hub of New England"

All meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Quote/Unquote

"Many people question the value of longterm planning. Even William Whyte, one of the greatest planners of our time, said he was reluctant to plan beyond five years. To be sure, we cannot prescribe exactly how a city or neighborhood should look in two or three decades. But any kind of planning requires a context. People need a foundation — open spaces, public transit, housing for all, economic activity centers, streets and public amenities — and foundations don't just happen. People plan them. We owe that to the next generation."

— Linda Mongelli Haar, Director of Planning and
Zoning, Boston Redevelopment Authority

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Neighborhoods Set Planning Priorities

Residents, Businesses Call for Better Links To Resources of City

Boston 400, the City's comprehensive planning initiative, has developed planning priorities designed to create seamless connections between neighborhoods and natural, cultural, and educational opportunities.

These priorities, which emerged from more than 150 community meetings across the city, will guide planning and development as the City nears its 400th anniversary in 2030. At the direction of mayor Thomas M. Menino, the Boston Redevelopment Authority is coordinating Boston 400 among City agencies.

To realize the vision of "the city as a natural environment," Boston 400 has called for greater access to the Boston Harbor and Harbor Islands, completion of the restoration of the Emerald Necklace, enhanced systems of neighborhood parks, and initiatives to achieve environmental justice.

Well-defined and connected natural resources create the foundation for other efforts, such as initiatives to connect community facilities to common civic spaces, special programs to link families and children to cultural and educational opportunities, and new efforts to improve school buildings and other public facilities throughout the city.

Multi-modal transportation and strong standards of streetscape and urban design will support all of these efforts. Boston 400 will call for expanded public transit options, enhanced pedestrian spaces, and a seamless bicycle network.

Throughout the community planning process, which began in September 1997, residents urged Boston 400 to devise strategies to take better advantage of existing assets. Those assets include Boston Harbor and the city's five rivers, a world-class park system, a diverse economy, and vast cultural and historic resources.

People who attended community meetings urged Boston 400 to undertake a number of initiatives:

Citywide Parks and Natural Spaces. One of the top goals for Boston 400 is to develop complete access for all people to Boston Harbor and to the new Boston Harbor Islands National Park. Residents have called for the deployment of special transit loops to provide access to the Harbor for neighborhoods traditionally under-served by public transportation like Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan.

Other citywide parks and natural spaces — such as Franklin Park, the Neponset River Greenway, and Charles River Reservation — also need creative transportation and planning efforts to be connected to Boston's neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Parks and Natural Spaces. Boston 400 also will recommend a major effort to create "emerald bracelets" — seamless systems of neighborhood parks and other community resources — in each community of Boston.

Most neighborhoods already have important parks within walking distance of residents. But some of these parks are outdated in design because of changes in community makeup and recreation patterns. Over a period of several years, the City should commit to whatever enhancements are necessary to make sure that all communities have well-designed and well-maintained parks that express the identities of their community. Emphasis would be on improvements and connections, but acquisition of new spaces may be necessary.

Transportation Connections. Ease of access to the city's many resources is critical for people in every

(Continued on page 4)



Piers Park offers unparalleled views of Boston's waterfront and skyline.

Planning Process Will Produce Report on City's Future Options

Boston 400 aims to connect the people of Boston to the resources of the city by defining a long-term planning agenda that will protect and enhance Boston's qualities as a livable city.

To prosper into the next century, Boston needs to build on four major qualities that make it distinctive. Boston is widely recognized to be:

- A city of neighborhoods.
- A vital natural environment.
- A cultural and learning center.
- The hub of transportation and employment for New England.

To pursue these goals, Boston needs to provide a quality physical infrastructure, an excellent public education for school-age residents, and housing for people of all income levels. Boston 400's role is to focus on the physical city — streets and sidewalks, parks and open spaces, residential areas, transit, schools and public buildings, Downtown and neighborhood business districts, museums and other cultural attractions, environmental quality, and the physical components of our housing and school systems.

Boston 400 coordinated an extensive process of public engagement to define the goals and strategies to guide the City to its 400th anniversary in 2030. The centerpiece of the process was a series of more than 150

community meetings at neighborhoods throughout the city, which involved more than 1,000 people.

Once the first phase of community meetings was completed in June of 1998, Boston 400 created several working committees to synthesize the material gathered in the neighborhoods and gather additional information from community leaders and professionals.

Five of the committees explored planning opportunities for the critical spaces and systems of the city: Parks and Natural Spaces, Transportation Connections, Housing Opportunities, Downtown Center of Activity, and Cultural and Historic Resources.

Three other committees — Streetscape and Urban Design, Employment and Economic Development, and Spaces for Families and Children — are developing guidelines to be used for future development in Boston.

From now until the spring, the BRA will solicit ideas about which projects should get top priority. Those ideas will be incorporated into later planning documents including Boston 400's initial report to the city.

The report planned for next year — tentatively titled *Connecting the City and Its People: A Boston 400 Report on Planning Options for the Next Generation* — will be the subject of several spring forums where Bostonians can again contribute to the process.

Here is what we've heard so far . . .

Since last year, residents of Boston's neighborhoods have gathered in public meetings to express their visions to guide the City to its 400th anniversary in 2030. These two pages offer a sampling of those suggestions. We invite residents and merchants to keep the conversation going. Take a few minutes to look over these ideas, and tell us what you think. Join your neighbors and be a part of planning the City for its next generation.

Main Street

The focal point of Charlestown's public realm, Main Street needs a better variety of retail, office, and cultural activity. Conduct a marketing study to determine viable businesses. Redesign the Bunker Hill Mall to present an active face to the street. Redesign Mishawam Housing Development to enhance the street's architectural and commercial character.

Charlestown neck

The Charlestown neck area is isolated from the rest of the community by roads that intimidate pedestrians. Heavy traffic on Cambridge Street exacerbates the isolation. Develop streetscape improvements, eliminate the proposed I-93 off-ramp, reroute traffic with the reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue, and reduce the number of curb cuts.

Alleyways

The North End has many alleys that could be developed to enhance and connect the open space system in this densely developed neighborhood. Create a system of landscaped pedestrian walkways (such as Greenough Lane) with improved paving, lighting, and landscaping to connect areas of activity with open space. Mark the spaces with clean, simple signage.

Public facilities

Public restrooms are needed in parks as well as elsewhere in these waterfront communities to serve residents and tourists. Reopen restrooms on the North End's Prado, establish pay toilets at key locations, include public restrooms in the Parcel 7 vent building. Develop an aggressive program to provide street furniture at critical public spaces.

East Boston master planning

Through many planning efforts, publications, and projects, East Boston residents and merchants have expressed a number of important concerns. The Boston Redevelopment Authority is working with ICON architecture, inc. on a master plan for East Boston that will develop specific implementation strategies. Key issues include land use, open space and public-realm enhancement, infrastructure and transportation improvements, protection of the urban fabric and historic resources, and waterfront and economic development.

East Boston waterfront development

The East Boston Master Plan aims to provide for full utilization of the Inner Harbor waterfront and Chelsea River corridor for commercial, maritime, residential, industrial, and recreational uses. Development of specific strategies is one of the core objectives of the master plan. A related objective is to improve access to and from the waterfront for the neighborhoods and East Boston as a whole. The community is working with Massport to encourage the redevelopment of Pier 1 and nearby land for more intensive use.

East Boston economic development

Economic development in East Boston should be supported with a compatible mix of public and private projects, including housing, retail, office development, industrial activity, and open spaces, which will complement the community as a whole. These spaces should be well-designed and well-connected so that parts reinforce each other. The community also seeks to reinforce the existing commercial and business centers and increase the quality and variety of employment opportunities for residents of East Boston.

New open space

Major highway construction projects provide opportunities to increase open space. Central Artery North Area improvements and proposed Rutherford Avenue reconstruction provide possibilities for new open space along the Charles River, the Mystic River, and in Sullivan and City Squares. Maximize the open space development that is designed specifically for neighborhood use. Study the possibility of developing a bike path along the historic Middlesex Canal route to connect the waterfront system with Charlestown's interior.



Dewey Beach

Forty years ago, Charlestown's Dewey Beach was an active spot for recreation on the Mystic River. However, development and industrial activities have polluted the area to dangerous levels. To build on cleanup efforts, establish convenient access to the waterfront. Restore the beach for swimming and add docks for boating. Place historic markers along the water.

Medford Street

Medford Street, Charlestown, is a major interface between a residential community and the commercial and industrial waterfront. Divert trucks off the street to a more appropriate route that reduces the impact of commercial traffic on residents. Redevelop the industrial and commercial properties with adequate landscaping to appropriately conceal industrial activities.

City Square

With the new connection between the Tobin Bridge and Interstate 93, City Square in Charlestown has been rediscovered as a vital mixed-use district. Redevelop the area to create a strong and attractive commercial center that is a gateway for people entering the City from the north. Continue to enhance the pedestrian connections between the square and Downtown Boston.

Salem & Hanover Streets

Salem and Hanover Streets are the focal points of the North End's vibrant mix of community businesses, restaurants, and historic sites. Strengthen the business district by encouraging retail and service uses that serve the local community as well as visitors. Extend Hanover Street to Cambridge Street as part of the development on the depressed Central Artery.

Historic character of North End

As Boston's oldest neighborhood, the North End offers a many-layered story of the City's development from the old Shawmut Peninsula through successive waves of immigration to the mixed-use district of today. Work with Boston Landmarks Commission to protect the North End's historic character, possibly with designation as a historic district. Maintain and enforce the current 55-foot height limit. Develop spaces that celebrate the rich and varied history of the neighborhood. Install orientation kiosks or other spaces that guide newcomers to key sites.

Open space and harbor access

East Boston, formerly islands, boasts a wide range of natural spaces and resources that should form the basis of its physical identity. Residents would like to develop a network of open spaces that would build on existing resources and improve the quality of life in the neighborhoods. This would include developing a Harborwalk trail along the waterfront and building pedestrian connections between the East Boston Greenway and residential areas, as well as upgrading neighborhood parks and recreation spaces and developing a seamless bicycle network.

Historic development

Communities throughout Boston treasure the historic character of their neighborhoods — vintage housing, traditional streetscape and civic squares, waterfront access, and parks. Caring for the legacies of the past offers critical ways to build for the future, since it strengthens the organic character of the community. This often requires special efforts to address developers, particularly chain outlets, who operate with "cookie cutter" approaches to construction, parking, and other issues. The North End, Charlestown, and East Boston all could serve as models of historically sensitive development.

Traffic congestion

Charlestown is at the confluence of the regional highway system. This provides the potential for easy access but also the possibility of congestion and through traffic on neighborhood streets. Direct traffic around the neighborhood and onto the proposed Rutherford Avenue bypass and the Medford Street bypass. Work with the Rutherford Avenue planning process to devise new ways of channeling traffic away from residential areas. Shield residents from noisy, disruptive industrial traffic by directing trucks from working port areas to the Interstate highway system.

Access to Boston

One of these neighborhoods' greatest strengths is their close proximity to Downtown Boston, the airport, and the regional transportation system. Strengthen pedestrian connections between City Square and downtown, and from the North End's main corridors to downtown. Ensure that gateways such as City Square, Route 99, Sullivan Square, Maverick Square, Hanover Street, and all water transit access points are welcoming to visitors and residents alike. Emphasize pedestrian, bicycle, and water access; public transportation; streetscape design; and accurate, clear signage.

Add to the agenda

We want your input. To comment on the ideas presented here — or any aspect of the City's comprehensive planning process — call us, write us, fax us, or e-mail us. Our contact information is listed on page 4 of this document.

Planning Process Begins With Community

From the very beginning, Boston 400 has developed a wide range of vehicles for Bostonians to provide input into the City's first comprehensive planning process since 1965.

The Boston 400 process began in 1997, when Mayor Thomas M. Menino directed the Boston Redevelopment Authority to seek the involvement of all of the city's neighborhoods in identifying issues and opportunities for the next generation.

As Boston 400 planners fanned out into the neighborhoods, the BRA also formed a task force and engaged other city agencies in the discussions about long-term planning priorities.

Starting last fall, Boston 400 conducted close to 150 meetings in all of the city's neighborhoods, attracting over 1,000 participants. These meetings attracted a wide range of residents and merchants — including many who had never participated in community planning processes before — and set the agenda for BRA planners and the Boston 400 Task Force.

The neighborhood meetings addressed a wide range of topics, depending on the wishes of the people in attendance. The topics included: parks as recreational spaces, environmental systems, public transit, traffic congestion, housing development, commercial development, museums and other cultural sites, reuse of abandoned properties, access and development of water resources, signage, and university and medical spaces.

While expressing creative visions for the neighborhoods, residents also looked for ways to make connections with the rest of the city. Residents have called for major new investments in public transit, parks and natural spaces, cultural resources, economic development, streetscape, and other systems and services that serve the whole city.

The task force includes a wide range of civic and community leaders. The task force met monthly in 1997 and the spring of 1998 to explore a broad range of planning issues, and also heard from a number of guest speakers on issues such as the changing demographics of Boston and planning strategies of other cities in the U.S. and Europe. Meetings were open to the public and attracted many Bostonians who were not task force members.

This past summer, Boston 400 broke up the task force into eight working committees to sift through the issues raised in the neighborhood meetings.

Five committees address spaces and systems of the city: Parks and Natural Spaces, Transportation Connections, Housing Opportunities, Downtown, and Cultural and Historic Resources. Three other committees are developing guidelines for planning throughout the city: Streetscape and Urban Design, Employment and Economic Development, and Spaces for Families and Children.

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Charlestown homes recall Colonial days.

Boston 400 Identifies Citywide Initiatives

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You can reach us in several ways:

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Boston, MA 02201-1007
Call: (617) 918-4338
Fax: (617) 367-6087
E-mail: boston400.bra@ci.boston.ma.us

Thank you for your input.



North Enders play basketball within the view of Old Ironsides.

Boston UPDATE

Mayor Thomas M. Menino, City of Boston

Winter 1998-99

Neighborhoods Set Planning Priorities



The old Baker Chocolate Factory anchors development along the Neponset River.

Residents, Businesses Call for Better Links To Resources of City

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These priorities, which emerged from more than 150 community meetings across the city, will guide planning and development as the City nears its 400th anniversary in 2030. At the direction of mayor Thomas M. Menino, the Boston Redevelopment Authority is coordinating Boston 400 among City agencies.

To realize the vision of "the city as a natural environment," Boston 400 has called for greater access to the Boston Harbor and Harbor Islands, completion of the restoration of the Emerald Necklace, enhanced systems of neighborhood parks, and initiatives to achieve environmental justice.

Well-defined and connected natural resources create the foundation for other efforts, such as initiatives to connect community facilities to common civic spaces, special programs to link families and children to cultural and educational opportunities, and new efforts to improve school buildings and other public facilities throughout the city.

Multi-modal transportation and strong standards of streetscape and urban design will support all of these efforts. Boston 400 will call for expanded public transit options, enhanced pedestrian spaces, and a seamless bicycle network.

Throughout the community planning process, which began in September 1997, residents urged Boston 400 to devise strategies to take better advantage of existing assets. Those assets include Boston Harbor and the city's five rivers, a world-class park system, a diverse economy, and vast cultural and historic resources.

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Other citywide parks and natural spaces — such as Franklin Park, the Neponset River Greenway, and Charles River Reservation — also need creative transportation and planning efforts to be connected to Boston's neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Parks and Natural Spaces. Boston 400 also will recommend a major effort to create "emerald bracelets" — seamless systems that link neighborhood parks with other community resources, such as schools, libraries, community centers, historic and cultural resources, and business districts.

Most neighborhoods already have important parks within walking distance of residents. The "emerald bracelets" will help to extend the ease of access to larger stretches of the neighborhood through such design elements as signage, landscaping, and stairs and other pathways. In addition to these improvements, the City will consider which communities require acquisition of new park spaces. Through these initiatives, the City will help communities express their unique identities.

Transportation Connections. Ease of access to the city's many resources is critical for people in every

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Boston 400 aims to connect the people of Boston to the resources of the city by defining a long-term planning agenda that will protect and enhance Boston's qualities as a livable city.

To prosper into the next century, Boston needs to build on four major qualities that make it distinctive. Boston is widely recognized to be:

- A city of neighborhoods.
- A vital natural environment.
- A cultural and learning center.
- The hub of transportation and employment for New England.

To pursue these goals, Boston needs to provide a quality physical infrastructure, an excellent public education for school-age residents, and housing for people of all income levels. Boston 400's role is to focus on the physical city — streets and sidewalks, parks and open spaces, residential areas, transit, schools and public buildings, Downtown and neighborhood business districts, museums and other cultural attractions, environmental quality, and the physical components of our housing and school systems.

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Blue Hill Avenue

One of the city's critical north-south connectors, Blue Hill Avenue is a southern gateway to Boston and a critical entrance to Roxbury. Now dominated by car traffic, the Avenue could be a major mass transit corridor. Redesign the street as a transit boulevard by extending the Silver Line from Dudley Square, down Warren Street, and then down Blue Hill Avenue to Mattapan Square.

Columbia Road

Realize Frederick Law Olmsted's original vision of Columbia Road as the final link in the Emerald Necklace between Franklin Park and Boston Harbor. Over a 30-year period, develop streetscape improvements that emphasize the road's role as a major piece of Boston's city-wide park system. Increase the street's "green" elements and introduce traffic-calming tools.

Franklin Park

Franklin Park is in danger of being "loved to death" by zoo visitors, golfers, festival-goers, and drivers on Circuit Drive. Develop a comprehensive plan that includes design improvements, traffic and parking plans, better transit access, and economic development in surrounding communities. Repair links to Forest Hills and Boston Harbor. Develop systems to coordinate park spaces.

Storefront churches

Because of a lack of development along Dorchester's major boulevards since the 1970's, many churches bought parcels along the boulevards and now dominate many pockets of the City. These churches vitalize the area on weekends but lie dormant other days. Offer incentives to develop "campuses" to foster community use of these facilities, front yards, and parking spaces.

Health centers

Health centers have become the center of community life in Dorchester and other neighborhoods with diverse populations. These centers provide common spaces for families and other residents and social-service providers. Develop incentives for the improvement of public-oriented spaces associated with health centers, similar to the storefront church campus initiative.

Mixed-use districts

Dorchester boasts some of the city's greatest mixed-use districts. To develop these areas, establish strict standards for development of mixed-use districts with an emphasis on small-scale development, pedestrian and transit-oriented streets, close connections between buildings and sidewalks, limited parking located out of view of the street, and better transit service.

Neponset River basin

River Street is critical to the definition of the Neponset River, but residents and visitors often have no idea that they are so close to the river. Consider creation of a river development district, with design standards and development incentives and restrictions. Devise a comprehensive strategy to enhance cross streets, and build on efforts at Ryan Playground, Kennedy Playground, Mattapan Square, and Lower Mills. Share information and work with Milton residents and officials.

Adams Village

Adams Village offers a wide range of commercial places and has good car access and fair pedestrian access, but the district has little sense of a center. Strengthen the area's pedestrian environment. Develop long-term standards for redevelopment of properties occupied by large-scale stores. Study traffic on Gallivan Boulevard and Adams Street to devise ways to reduce through traffic. Create signage that orients people to the Village's offerings as well as nearby neighborhoods.

Links to the Red Line

Red Line service is frequent and reliable, but the relatively low density of Dorchester puts many residents beyond a convenient walking distance to the Red Line stops. Develop a plan for linking the communities of Dorchester to existing Red Line service. Improved access to the existing line could greatly improve overall service for a relatively low cost. Residents say that Savin Hill, Fields Corner, Shawmut, and Ashmont stations all need major redesign.

Urban Ring

To strengthen cross-town transit, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority is considering building a circumferential transit system. Various options include stations at the JFK/UMASS stop on the Red Line, the Upham's Corner stop on the Fairmount line, and an unspecified stop on the Fairmount line. Use the Urban Ring to reinforce dense urban activity in Dorchester. Assume that the vehicles for such a system use clean fuels and are attractive elements of the streetscape.

Fairmount Line

The Fairmount Commuter Rail line stops are inconvenient and service is infrequent. Consider converting the Fairmount line from a commuter rail to a rapid transit line. Build more stations along the way. Bus service usage on Blue Hill Avenue and Washington Street and Talbot Avenue suggests a strong demand for rapid transit. A new rapid transit line would strengthen the connections made possible by the urban ring and foster diverse development throughout Dorchester.

Boston Harbor Islands

Recently designated a national park, the islands offer great opportunities for passive and active recreation and historical and environmental education. Provide strong access to the entire Boston shoreline, from all points inland. Develop an economic development plan with opportunities for small enterprises that support island activities. Create attractive signage systems.

Upham's Corner

One of the city's liveliest neighborhood business districts, Upham's Corner has strong base of architecture and public space. Build on the efforts of Main Streets and the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City to improve the district's mixed-use character. Improve transportation access with better bus service and the possible inclusion of Upham's Corner on the Urban Ring.

Codman Square

Codman square is one of Dorchester's great historic settings, with strong community facilities, historic buildings, and a growing mix of businesses. Build on Main Streets initiatives by emphasizing mass transit connections; developing parking areas behind buildings, apart from the street; and enhancing the green spaces in front of the church and at Roberts Park.

Dorchester Avenue

Dorchester's true Main Street, "Oot Ave." offers a wide variety of commercial, residential, cultural, and social-service spaces. Develop a corridor improvement plan that focuses on infill of vacant properties and streetscape improvements that slow traffic. Devise strategies to improve bus movement. Enforce restrictions on double parking and commercial loading activities.

Fields Corner

Fields Corner has the potential to be a major center of activity along Dorchester Avenue. Rebuild the T station and offer incentives for development within a half mile of the station. Improve the borders of the suburban-style shopping center at the Park Street intersection, where a bleak parking lot discourages pedestrian traffic. Build housing on vacant lots.

Shopping centers

All over Dorchester, there are suburban-style shopping centers characterized by several chain stores located in a single building with large parking lots. These centers undermine the human-scale, historic character of Dorchester. Develop guidelines and incentives for improving the edges of shopping centers, gas stations, and other large-scale enterprises.



MILTON

QUINCY



What would you add to the agenda?

We want your input on the longterm future of Dorchester and all of Boston. To comment on the ideas presented here — or any aspect of the City's comprehensive planning process — call us, write us, fax us, or e-mail us. Our contact information is listed on page 4 of this document. If you would like more information about the Boston 400 community planning process, find us on the internet at www.ci.boston.ma.us/boston400/boston40.htm.

Planning Process Begins With Community

From the very beginning, Boston 400 has developed a wide range of vehicles for Bostonians to provide input into the City's first comprehensive planning process since 1965.

The Boston 400 process began in 1997, when Mayor Thomas M. Menino directed the Boston Redevelopment Authority to seek the involvement of all of the city's neighborhoods in identifying issues and opportunities for the next generation.

As Boston 400 planners fanned out into the neighborhoods, the BRA also formed a task force and engaged other City agencies in the discussions about long-term planning priorities.

Starting last fall, Boston 400 conducted close to 150 meetings in all of the city's neighborhoods, attracting over 1,000 participants. These meetings attracted a wide range of residents and merchants — including many who had never participated in community planning processes before — and set the agenda for BRA planners and the Boston 400 Task Force.

The neighborhood meetings addressed a wide range of topics, depending on the wishes of the people in attendance. The topics included: parks as recreational spaces, environmental systems, public transit, traffic congestion, housing development, commercial development, museums and other cultural sites, reuse of abandoned properties, access and development of water resources, signage, and university and medical spaces.

While expressing creative visions for the neighborhoods, residents also looked for ways to make connections with the rest of the city. Residents have called for major new investments in public transit, parks and natural spaces, cultural resources, economic development, streetscape, and other systems and services that serve the whole city.

The task force includes a wide range of civic and community leaders. The task force met monthly in 1997 and the spring of 1998 to explore a broad range of planning issues, and also heard from a number of guest speakers on issues such as the changing demographics of Boston and planning strategies of other cities in the U.S. and Europe. Meetings were open to the public and attracted many Bostonians who were not task force members.

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Thank you for your input.



Columbia Road offers unique opportunities as a grand boulevard to Boston Harbor.

BOSTON UPDATE

Mayor Thomas M. Menino, City of Boston

Winter 1998-99

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Residents, Businesses Call for Better Links To Resources of City

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South Boston and other neighborhoods offer an eclectic array of housing types.

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Harbortrail

The South Bay Harbortrail initiative proposes a new pedestrian and bicycle trail linking Roxbury and the South End to Boston Harbor and the Harbor Islands via the Southwest Corridor Park, Melnea Cass Boulevard Bikeway, the BioSquare project, the Central Artery surface park, Fort Point Channel, the Children's and Computer Museums, and the Seaport.

24-hour downtown

Boston has always thrived when it has fostered mixed-use districts throughout the City. No less than outlying neighborhoods, Downtown and its nearby neighborhoods need to be home to a wide range of residential opportunities, businesses, and cultural and historic opportunities. A critical element of mixed-use development is expanded and more efficient transit.

South End EDA

The South End Economic Development Area is a prime location with proximity to the area's major regional highways. The South End/Lower Roxbury Development Policy Plan recommends new zoning to allow a broad spectrum of commercial development. Support the plan and development projects in the area that reinforce the scale and assets of the neighborhood.

Middle-income housing

Back Bay and the South End have seen extreme rises in housing costs for middle-income residents, with student populations putting severe pressure on housing markets. Enact zoning that preserves affordable units. Work with institutions to address the pressure of student housing. Pursue new efforts to develop mixed-use communities and increase the housing stock.

Seaport-to-Back Bay connection

Meet the transportation challenges posed by the development of the Seaport District. Use this development to reduce reliance on automobile travel. Develop transit connections between the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center and Back Bay, with links to the Red, Orange, and Silver Lines. Keep parking and traffic off neighborhood streets. Limit the number of parking spaces in the core area to strengthen the incentive to use mass transit. Provide attractive and detailed information and directions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

Cambridge Street

Cambridge Street is a critical border for Beacon Hill, the West End, Government Center, and the City of Cambridge. This boulevard feeds dangerous and disruptive traffic into Beacon Hill. Traffic undermines pedestrian crossings from the south to the north sides of the street. The Cambridge Street Boulevard Redesign (nearing completion) should alleviate crossing problems. State funding is needed for reconstruction. The redesign of the Red line station at Charles/MGH could provide a critical node for redesign and re-orientation of the whole corridor.

Washington Street

Boston's "Main Street for the 21st Century" has always been the spine of the city, from the days when it was the only connection from the Shawmut Peninsula to the mainland. Washington Street now offers tremendous opportunities for business and residential development. Focus on pedestrian oriented design, preservation of historic buildings, and housing development. Develop Washington Street outward as a series of communities that relate to the City's historic core. Relate the Street's planning to other critical Downtown corridors.

Historic Chinatown

Boston's Chinatown is a historic and diverse community that constantly struggles to maintain its authenticity in the face of traffic and development pressures. Establish economic policies favorable to small business owners to foster economic diversity. Ensure that streetscape design reinforces bustling, 24-hour activity. Install street furniture and place a public restroom at the Phillips Square area on Harrison Avenue. Establish a permanent trail, such as a brick path in the sidewalk, that leads residents and visitors through the history and culture of Chinatown.

Massachusetts Turnpike air rights

Planning process recently began to set standards for the air rights above the Massachusetts Turnpike. Articulate development standards to emphasize the scale and historic styles of the neighborhoods. In private developments, insist on mixed-use development for the air rights parcels. Build a park over the highway to afford Chinatown residents much-needed "breathing room." Since more Chinese families are living south of Kneeland Street, a park over the turnpike would offer an important connection to central Chinatown.

Seaport District

The Seaport District's new convention center and comprehensive plan offer potential for dynamic office, hotel, residential, and cultural development. Guarantee waterfront access and views. Strengthen Boston's waterfront activity. Surround the convention center with buffers to protect residential areas. Create new housing opportunities. Create incentives for a diverse array of businesses including a working port and maritime and industrial activities. Establish efficient, designated routes for truck traffic.

Boylston Street

Boylston Street is incoherent. Architectural styles are haphazard and incompatible, and pavements are patchy. Gaps in streetscape discourage pedestrian traffic, street trees are in decline, and auto traffic is dangerous. Foster diversity through zoning that allows different activities on different floors. Consider filling Hynes arcade with small shops; discuss plans for open space and garage-ramp area with Prudential. Ban additional commercial parking spaces. Initiate design process to replace new library's fortress walls.

Infrastructure

Many critical underground utilities were built 75 to 100 years ago and now pose serious problems to the structural integrity of buildings and the functionality of the utilities. Develop a management plan for all underground utilities. Include maintenance and replacement schedules and coordination guidelines for various entities that do street and/or excavation work.

MBTA Silver Line

This new line will provide rapid transit service along Washington Street. The Washington Street Task Force recommended pedestrian-oriented design, on-street parking, links from Downtown Crossing that extend south of Dudley Square to Mattapan Square. Emphasize clustering and design of developments near transit nodes.

Central Artery

The depression of the Central Artery presents unique opportunities to strengthen the connections and orientation of the Downtown and surrounding communities. Re-establish historic streets, develop mixed-use urban villages, and create parks and other civic spaces that can attract pedestrian activity and develop creative maintenance programs.

Parking

The area's parking crunch threatens the character of its neighborhoods. Develop design incentives to reduce parking. Increase T ridership through marketing and promotions. Lobby the MBTA to extend hours. Increase the cab fleet. Initiate a car-sharing program, in which people could rent cars for occasional use similar to time-sharing arrangements.



Massachusetts Avenue

The traffic congestion and pedestrian hazards on Massachusetts Avenue are arguably the worst in the City. Street trees are in decline and sidewalks are in disrepair. Promote a residential presence on upper-level floors of buildings to enhance the mixed-use character of the street. Promote traffic-calming measures, improve traffic light timing for longer walk cycles, redesign the Massachusetts Avenue bus stop, and encourage upgrades of retail sections (especially between Commonwealth Avenue and Beacon Street). Improve the visibility of landmark buildings and sites.

Esplanade

The Back Bay's Esplanade, Boston Common, and Beacon Street and Commonwealth Avenue bear the brunt of hosting many of Boston's large public events. It is important to distribute some of these events to under-utilized sections of the City to benefit other neighborhoods and to relieve pressure on the Back Bay and Beacon Hill. Find alternate locations for large, public gatherings. Make City Hall Plaza as event-friendly as the Esplanade and maintain open space on the Plaza. Make large events "free T" events and provide transit service late into the night.

Add to the agenda

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Planning Process Begins With Community

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As Boston 400 planners fanned out into the neighborhoods, the BRA also formed a task force and engaged other City agencies in the discussions about long-term planning priorities.

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The neighborhood meetings addressed a wide range of topics, depending on the wishes of the people in attendance. The topics included: parks as recreational spaces, environmental systems, public transit, traffic congestion, housing development, commercial development, museums and other cultural sites, reuse of abandoned properties, access and development of water resources, signage, and university and medical spaces.

While expressing creative visions for the neighborhoods, residents also looked for ways to make connections with the rest of the city. Residents have called for major new investments in public transit, parks and natural spaces, cultural resources, economic development, streetscape, and other systems and services that serve the whole city.

The task force includes a wide range of civic and community leaders. The task force met monthly in 1997 and the spring of 1998 to explore a broad range of planning issues, and also heard from a number of guest speakers on issues such as the changing demographics of Boston and planning strategies of other cities in the U.S. and Europe. Meetings were open to the public and attracted many Bostonians who were not task force members.

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Other speakers included Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; Stephen Jay Gould, a leading scientist at Harvard University; directors of the Boston Redevelopment Authority from Edward Logue to Thomas N. O'Brien; author James Carroll; and Stanley Lowe, Director of the Pittsburgh Housing Authority.

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Chinatown's shops and restaurants

Boston 400 Identifies Citywide Initiatives

(Continued from page 1)

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In addition, Boston 400 will develop strategies for reducing the impact of commuters and other regional traffic on neighborhoods. Traffic calming measures and rerouting of regional traffic are needed to allow neighborhoods the opportunity to protect and enhance their own local resources and character. In addition, efforts are needed to spur development at major transit nodes to reduce the need for cars in the city.

Cultural and Historic Resources. Boston 400 will establish major initiatives to connect the city's cultural and historic assets to the neighborhoods. Proposals include new transit loops, enhanced streetscape design and landscaping, incentives for building facade improvements, better designs for schools and other civic buildings, and more performance and display spaces in the neighborhoods. The goal is to create places where people of all ages can take full advantage of community resources.

Planning is already underway for systems of collaboration among museums and other cultural institutions. The efforts might include discount tickets, maps, and information displays.

Downtown Center of Activity. Working with existing plans and efforts, Boston 400 will devise creative approaches to enhance the major streets and focal points of the Downtown. Boston 400 will also work with community and business groups to ensure that as parks and cultural spaces are designed and developed on the Central Artery, connections to the Downtown are made to enhance its historic character, pedestrian environment, and economic opportunities.

Housing Opportunities. Boston 400 has under-

taken an analysis of long-term housing needs in the city and what funding tools and creative initiatives might be used to confront the problem of affordable housing in the city.

Streetscape and Urban Design. To ensure that Boston retains its urban character as it develops new economic and housing opportunities, Boston 400 has worked with architects and planners to identify principles of good urban design. Community leaders, developers, business people, and others have been involved in reviewing these principles.

Boston 400's streetscape and urban design committee will also participate in efforts to develop design guidelines for new schools and civic buildings.

Employment and Economic Development. Boston 400 will undertake a citywide inventory and analysis of the goods and services that are in short supply in the neighborhoods — as well as those which are in danger of being oversupplied. These studies will be used to devise programs for job training, local economic development, and long-term infrastructure planning.

Another economic development priority is the development of "incubators" for emerging businesses and technologies. Incubators would provide spaces for research, management, and even manufacturing, as well as "one-stop shopping" for essential services such as legal and accounting assistance.

For a complete review of issues and opportunities identified by residents of all of Boston's neighborhoods, refer to the Boston 400 web page on the Internet at www.ci.boston.ma.us/boston400/boston40.htm.

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Once you have read the Boston 400 materials, contact us to tell us your priorities for planning for Boston's next generation.

You can reach us in several ways:

Write: Boston 400/BRA
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201-1007

Call: (617) 918-4338

Fax: (617) 367-6087

E-mail: boston400.bra@ci.boston.ma.us

Thank you for your input.



Brownstone facades define the elegant Commonwealth Avenue Mall.

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Boston UPDATE

Mayor Thomas M. Menino, City of Boston

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Neighborhoods Set Planning Priorities



Elegant apartments are part of a broad mix of housing types in Allston and Brighton.

Residents, Businesses Call for Better Links To Resources of City

Boston 400, the City's comprehensive planning initiative, has developed planning priorities designed to create seamless connections between neighborhoods and natural, cultural, and educational opportunities.

These priorities, which emerged from more than 150 community meetings across the city, will guide planning and development as the City nears its 400th anniversary in 2030. At the direction of mayor Thomas M. Menino, the Boston Redevelopment Authority is coordinating Boston 400 among City agencies.

To realize the vision of "the city as a natural environment," Boston 400 has called for greater access to the Boston Harbor and Harbor Islands, completion of the restoration of the Emerald Necklace, enhanced systems of neighborhood parks, and initiatives to achieve environmental justice.

Well-defined and connected natural resources create the foundation for other efforts, such as initiatives to connect community facilities to common civic spaces, special programs to link families and children to cultural and educational opportunities, and new efforts to improve school buildings and other public facilities throughout the city.

Multi-modal transportation and strong standards of streetscape and urban design will support all of these efforts. Boston 400 will call for expanded public transit options, enhanced pedestrian spaces, and a seamless bicycle network.

Throughout the community planning process, which began in September 1997, residents urged Boston 400 to devise strategies to take better advantage of existing assets. Those assets include Boston Harbor and the city's five rivers, a world-class park system, a diverse economy, and vast cultural and historic resources.

People who attended community meetings urged Boston 400 to undertake a number of initiatives:

Citywide Parks and Natural Spaces. One of the top goals for Boston 400 is to develop complete access for all people to Boston Harbor and to the new Boston Harbor Islands National Park. Residents have called for the deployment of special transit loops to provide access to the Harbor for neighborhoods traditionally under-served by public transportation like Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan.

Other citywide parks and natural spaces — such as Franklin Park, the Neponset River Greenway, and Charles River Reservation — also need creative transportation and planning efforts to be connected to Boston's neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Parks and Natural Spaces. Boston 400 also will recommend a major effort to create "emerald bracelets" — seamless systems that link neighborhood parks with other community resources, such as schools, libraries, community centers, historic and cultural resources, and business districts.

Most neighborhoods already have important parks within walking distance of residents. The "emerald bracelets" will help to extend the ease of access to larger stretches of the neighborhood through such design elements as signage, landscaping, and stairs and other pathways. In addition to these improvements, the City will consider which communities require acquisition of new park spaces. Through these initiatives, the City will help communities express their unique identities.

Transportation Connections. Ease of access to the city's many resources is critical for people in every

(Continued on page 4)

Planning Process Will Produce Report on City's Future Options

Boston 400 aims to connect the people of Boston to the resources of the city by defining a long-term planning agenda that will protect and enhance Boston's qualities as a livable city.

To prosper into the next century, Boston needs to build on four major qualities that make it distinctive. Boston is widely recognized to be:

- A city of neighborhoods.
- A vital natural environment.
- A cultural and learning center.
- The hub of transportation and employment for New England.

To pursue these goals, Boston needs to provide a quality physical infrastructure, an excellent public education for school-age residents, and housing for people of all income levels. Boston 400's role is to focus on the physical city — streets and sidewalks, parks and open spaces, residential areas, transit, schools and public buildings, Downtown and neighborhood business districts, museums and other cultural attractions, environmental quality, and the physical components of our housing and school systems.

Boston 400 coordinated an extensive process of public engagement to define the goals and strategies to guide the City to its 400th anniversary in 2030. The centerpiece of the process was a series of more than 150

community meetings at neighborhoods throughout the city, which involved more than 1,000 people.

Once the first phase of community meetings was completed in June of 1998, Boston 400 created several working committees to synthesize the material gathered in the neighborhoods and gather additional information from community leaders and professionals.

Five of the committees explored planning opportunities for the critical spaces and systems of the city: Parks and Natural Spaces, Transportation Connections, Housing Opportunities, Downtown Center of Activity, and Cultural and Historic Resources.

Three other committees — Streetscape and Urban Design, Employment and Economic Development, and Spaces for Families and Children — are developing guidelines to be used for future development in Boston.

From now until the spring, the BRA will solicit ideas about which projects should get top priority. Those ideas will be incorporated into later planning documents including Boston 400's initial report to the city.

The report planned for next year — tentatively titled *Connecting the City and Its People: A Boston 400 Report on Planning Options for the Next Generation* — will be the subject of several spring forums where Bostonians can again contribute to the process.

Here is what we've heard so far . . .

Since last year, residents of Boston's neighborhoods have gathered in public meetings to express their visions to guide the City to its 400th anniversary in 2030. These two pages offer a sampling of those suggestions. We invite residents and merchants to keep the conversation going. Take a few minutes to look over these ideas, and tell us what you think. Join your neighbors and be a part of planning the City for its next generation.

Urban Ring

The possible construction of the circumferential transit system — which would link East Boston, Charlestown, Somerville, Cambridge, Brookline, Longwood, Dudley, northern Dorchester, and South Boston — would create important new connections to Fenway. Insist that connections to the Longwood Medical and Academic Area be a major priority.

Harvard Avenue

Harvard Avenue is the major roadway connection between Jamaica Plain, Brookline, Brighton, Allston, and Cambridge. Traffic is always heavy, and the Harvard Street bus from Dudley to Harvard Square is one of Boston's busiest routes. Implement a traffic reduction plan and build on Urban Ring study efforts. Consider adoption of rush-hour traffic strategies.

Rail yards

Parts of the Conrail Freight Yard and the Roma Transportation Yard are either underutilized or not utilized at all. Consider alternative uses for the lands, including industrial development. Develop a plan for that area and for other potential industrial sites throughout Boston. Concentrate on transit and other linkages to integrate these spaces into the rest of the City.

Cleveland Circle

Cleveland Circle has the potential to be one of the City's best urban villages. However, Cleveland Circle is dominated by autos and poses pedestrian safety problems. Redesign the intersection of Chestnut Hill Avenue and Beacon Street with traffic-calming measures, pedestrian amenities, mixed-use incentives, human-scale lighting, and appropriate trees and greenery.

Open water resources

The Chestnut Hill Reservoir and pumping station are assets to the neighborhood and city. At some point, the reservoir will no longer be an emergency water source, and the site could be redeveloped as a "new Jamaica Pond." Chandler Pond is currently underutilized due to a half-complete boardwalk, maintenance issues, and storm-water drainage problems. Develop a master recreational and environmental plan. Restore streams that flow from Chandler Pond to the Charles River and establish a greenway that links the two with pedestrian and bicycle recreation paths.

WATERTOWN



Lincoln Street / Mass Pike

The Massachusetts Turnpike splits Allston, leaving residents on the north isolated from business districts. Better streetscape design and coordinated development of nearby vacant parcels can begin to give the area a sense of coherence and excitement. Improve streetscape to make better connections across the Cambridge Street overpass. Focus on lighting, signage, and sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities. Create a greenway along Lincoln Street and the rail yards, with connections to the Charles River.

Charles River access

Soldiers Field Road, Storrow Drive, and interchanges such as the Bowker Overpass create obstacles for people trying to get to the Charles River and the Esplanade. Only a comprehensive transportation plan — which addresses concerns about commuter traffic, air rights development, transit, and mixed-use development in nearby neighborhoods — can open the river to nearby communities. Consider proposals to move Storrow Drive south, away from the river, in Allston/Brighton, to create space for an Esplanade extension.

Massachusetts Turnpike

The spaces above the Mass Pike offer great opportunities to reweave the fabric of the city, but development needs to be appropriate to the scale and character of the neighborhoods. Development should dovetail with efforts to reduce auto congestion throughout the City. Work with the new Citizens' Advisory Committee, appointed by the Mayor of Boston and the state Secretary of Transportation, to develop a master plan for longterm development of the "air rights" over the Pike.

Charles River

Connecting Allston / Brighton to Back Bay, the Charles River is a vital piece of the park system and the transportation network. The Metropolitan District Commission conducted a visioning process and released a draft report last September. Ensure that the final plan provides for maintenance of all areas along the Charles. Develop stronger connections to the Muddy River. Continue discussions about the enhancement of the Bowker Overpass area including the Muddy River and the park at Charlesgate East on Commonwealth Avenue.

Avenue of the Arts

Working under the auspices of the Fenway Alliance, the City has designated Huntington Avenue the Avenue of the Arts. Continue the planning with particular attention to the needs of pedestrians. Develop a consensus for extending the avenue in ways that enhance the street's identity while allowing other districts (e.g., Longwood) to maintain their identity as well.

Audubon Circle

This residential area has been overwhelmed by automobile traffic and cut off by the Massachusetts Turnpike overpass. Nearby development of Landmark Center threatens more congestion. Implement a major traffic-control plan and develop strategies for residential development. Recreate a local point to create the sense of place once offered by the turnabout.

New public schools

The Boston Arts Academy and Fenway High School offer innovative programs to children from all neighborhoods of the City. These schools give the community an opportunity to embrace youth issues and enhance the neighborhood's character. Create connections with local community organizations and institutions to take advantage of the opportunity.

Longwood transit

The Longwood Medical and Academic Area needs better transit links. The D line location and E line frequency are both problematic. Shuttles to Longwood should stop at the Kenmore and Ruggles T stops. Study Longwood traffic and transit in relation to larger traffic demands of the city and the metropolitan area. Consider more service at Yawkey Station.

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Green Line B trunk / public transit

Service along the B line is slow during the daytime and unreliable in the evening. Extend service hours and increase frequency of T runs. Recapture the original feeling of Commonwealth Avenue with development of a pedestrian mall from Kenmore Square to Boston College. Study the proper number of stops along the route to maximize the quality of service. Pursue the development of additional cross-town bus routes with relatively few stops and direct connections to existing rapid transit lines. Post bus schedules at bus shelters along all routes.

Yawkey and Fenway T stations

The Yawkey T station, on the Framingham / Worcester commuter rail line, is strategically located near Longwood and Kenmore Square, and could offer another alternative to commuters from the western suburbs to the Longwood Medical and Academic Area. Utilize the stop year-round instead of just for service to 81 Red Sox games at Fenway Park. The Fenway T station on the Green Line D trunk is unattractive and feels dangerous. Support redesign efforts to ensure that the station provides better service to the Landmark Center and Boylston Street shops.

Back Bay Fens / Muddy River

The Fens is a park with many complicated uses and connections. Residents have been concerned about pathways and lighting, dilapidated buildings, overgrown reeds in the Muddy River, and the safety and enjoyment of people using the park. The Muddy River is not safe or accessible for recreation or passive enjoyment. Build upon the Muddy River Action Group's work to develop a comprehensive strategy, with a focus on controlling the reeds, reopening covered river segments, improving water quality, and preventing local flooding.

Brookline Avenue / Boylston Street

Brookline Avenue serves as a major connector from the Boylston intersection at the Landmark Center, past Fenway Park, to Kenmore Square. The street is unsightly, offers inadequate space for bicyclists and pedestrians, and feels dangerous to all. Widen sidewalks, and set standards for signage and building facades to improve the feel of the street. For Boylston Street, traffic-calming, streetscape enhancement, control of signage, development of vacant spaces, and buffering of parking and other open lots, have all been suggested remedies to the current situation.

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Human-scale design is central to livability.

Boston 400 Identifies Citywide Initiatives

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Thank you for your input.



The Back Bay Fens offers a picturesque backdrop for the Museum of Fine Arts.

BOSTON UPDATE

Mayor Thomas M. Menino, City of Boston

Winter 1998-99

Neighborhoods Set Planning Priorities

Residents, Businesses Call for Better Links To Resources of City

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To pursue these goals, Boston needs to provide a quality physical infrastructure, an excellent public education for school-age residents, and housing for people of all income levels. Boston 400's role is to focus on the physical city — streets and sidewalks, parks and open spaces, residential areas, transit, schools and public buildings, Downtown and neighborhood business districts, museums and other cultural attractions, environmental quality, and the physical components of our housing and school systems.

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Public facilities

At the heart of any healthy community are libraries, community centers, schools, and other public buildings that make a statement about civic values. These buildings should strengthen connections between different public spaces, providing broad access and efficiency. Insist that these buildings be connected with each other and parks and lively public spaces.

Cummins Highway

Cummins Highway offers a direct connection between Roslindale Village and the Mattapan Square / Neponset River area. Build on the presence of the river and redesign the highway to be a parkway. Include in the design a bicycle lane, wider sidewalks, and safe pedestrian crossings. Use signage to orient people both to Roslindale and Mattapan resources.

Gardner Street park

The development of the former landfill on Gardner Street into a park is an exciting opportunity. Transportation to the park may be difficult for children, pedestrians, and bicyclists, because of the VFW Parkway. Ensure that a comprehensive, multi-modal transportation plan is part of the park planning process. Improve access for both Bostonians and visitors.

MDC parkway system

The Metropolitan District Commission's parkways work well for cars in the West Roxbury and Roslindale area and they are beautiful corridors. However, the paths and sidewalks along the parkways are in disrepair, making it difficult for bicyclists and pedestrians. Develop a multi-use strategy for management and design of all of the MDC Parkways.

Parks and playgrounds

A number of neighborhoods have expressed a need for parks and playgrounds that help define and showcase their community identities. One park that could benefit from redesign for this purpose is Almont Playground in Mattapan. Access to the park is made difficult by poorly marked roads, and the park lacks clear entrances and well-designed play spaces. Link Almont Playground to the Neponset with a green corridor and improved signage along Blue Hill Avenue. Redesign the park's edges. Include a more interactively designed play space akin to that at Ryan Playground in Mattapan.

Commuter Rail, public transit

MBTA Commuter Rail service to and from these communities is excellent for serving the commuter population in the neighborhoods with predictable, short weekday trips. But service is reduced or nonexistent on weekends, so the lines are not useful for off-peak trips. Consider converting the Fairmount Line, which runs from Readville to South Station, to a light rail line that runs seven days a week on a typical subway schedule. Establish a public transportation special events shuttle that stops at all of the neighborhood centers. Expand weekend service.

The 'Green Heart'

The new Boston Nature Center offers an opportunity to rethink critical issues about access to green spaces in the heart of the city, including Franklin Park, the Arnold Arboretum, and nearby cemeteries. These parks and natural spaces need to be accessible by foot, public transit, and bicycle in addition to by car. Develop a cooperative planning process with the major stakeholders. Put public transportation at the center of the discussion. Plan for the summer events that have large impacts on the parks themselves and surrounding neighborhoods.

Tot lots, small parks

Neighborhood residents say there are not enough small parks and tot lots within walking distance of their homes. Trends indicate that the populations of the neighborhoods are shifting as elderly homeowners and tenants give way to more families with children. Establish a citywide standard for residential proximity to parks and open spaces, with particular attention to spaces suitable for children. Inventory possible sites for tot lots and small play spaces, and determine appropriate locations for new play spaces in each neighborhood.

MBTA bus lines

Bus access to the area is limited, and transfers are awkward. Study travel needs along American Legion Highway. Improve access to key nodes like Forest Hills and Roxbury Community College. Determine bus routes that would support development of key neighborhood corridors. Provide benches, shelters, and bus schedules at bus stops. Consider dedicated bus lanes on Blue Hill Avenue, at least during rush hour. Examine the success of the new Silver Line to determine its appropriateness for Blue Hill Avenue.

Business districts

Outside major employment centers like Downtown and the Longwood Medical Area, the economic and social health of Boston turns on the strength of neighborhood business districts like Cleary and Logan Squares, Mattapan Square, Roslindale Village, Centre Street in West Roxbury, and Forest Hills. Above and beyond the City's successful Boston Main Streets program, these districts need strong design standards and transit connections, as well as incentives for a wide range of merchants to locate their businesses in the neighborhoods.

Historic renovations

The neighborhoods boast many graceful old houses and buildings that, in places, have been allowed to deteriorate. With aggressive infill, these structures could form the backbone of revitalization along Blue Hill Avenue, Washington Street, and Cummins Highway. Set clear and strict standards and incentives for revitalizing the City's historic structures.

H.P. community campus

The proximity of the branch library, YMCA, community center, Rogers School, Hyde Park Health Center, Most Precious Blood School, Academy of the Pacific Rim, and Hyde Park High School should foster better physical links to create a "Hyde Park community campus." Encourage physical pathways to support collaborative efforts between organizations.

Traffic and parking

Traffic in the major business centers — Roslindale Village; Centre Street; West Roxbury; Mattapan Square; Cleary and Logan Squares, Hyde Park — disrupts commercial activity. Encourage more commuters to use Commuter Rail service. Establish strict design standards for parking. Emphasize community character and streetscape design instead of parking.

Water management

During the summer, the Neponset River's flow is greatly reduced due to regional water-use patterns. Develop plans to address sewage, dams, fencing, and water usage. Consider forming a group modeled after the Muddy River Action Group. Without a broad coalition, it will be difficult to develop a workable plan to develop the riverway's full potential.

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Call: (617) 918-4338
Fax: (617) 367-6087
E-mail: boston400.bra@ci.boston.ma.us

Thank you for your input.



Gracious homes on tree-lined street of West Roxbury.

BOSTON UPDATE

Mayor Thomas M. Menino, City of Boston

Winter 1998-99

Neighborhoods Set Planning Priorities

Residents, Businesses Call for Better Links To Resources of City

Boston 400, the City's comprehensive planning initiative, has developed planning priorities designed to create seamless connections between neighborhoods and natural, cultural, and educational opportunities.

These priorities, which emerged from more than 150 community meetings across the city, will guide planning and development as the City nears its 400th anniversary in 2030. At the direction of mayor Thomas M. Menino, the Boston Redevelopment Authority is coordinating Boston 400 among City agencies.

To realize the vision of "the city as a natural environment," Boston 400 has called for greater access to the Boston Harbor and Harbor Islands, completion of the restoration of the Emerald Necklace, enhanced systems of neighborhood parks, and initiatives to achieve environmental justice.

Well-defined and connected natural resources create the foundation for other efforts, such as initiatives to connect community facilities to common civic spaces, special programs to link families and children to cultural and educational opportunities, and new efforts to improve school buildings and other public facilities throughout the city.

Multi-modal transportation and strong standards of streetscape and urban design will support all of these efforts. Boston 400 will call for expanded public transit options, enhanced pedestrian spaces, and a seamless bicycle network.

Throughout the community planning process, which began in September 1997, residents urged Boston 400 to devise strategies to take better advantage of existing assets. Those assets include Boston Harbor and the city's five rivers, a world-class park system, a diverse economy, and vast cultural and historic resources.

People who attended community meetings urged Boston 400 to undertake a number of initiatives:

Citywide Parks and Natural Spaces. One of the top goals for Boston 400 is to develop complete access for all people to Boston Harbor and to the new Boston Harbor Islands National Park. Residents have called for the deployment of special transit loops to provide access to the Harbor for neighborhoods traditionally under-served by public transportation like Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan.

Other citywide parks and natural spaces — such as Franklin Park, the Neponset River Greenway, and Charles River Reservation — also need creative transportation and planning efforts to be connected to Boston's neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Parks and Natural Spaces. Boston 400 also will recommend a major effort to create "emerald bracelets" — seamless systems that link neighborhood parks with other community resources, such as schools, libraries, community centers, historic and cultural resources, and business districts.

Most neighborhoods already have important parks within walking distance of residents. The "emerald bracelets" will help to extend the ease of access to larger stretches of the neighborhood through such design elements as signage, landscaping, and stairs and other pathways. In addition to these improvements, the City will consider which communities require acquisition of new park spaces. Through these initiatives, the City will help communities express their unique identities.

Transportation Connections. Ease of access to the city's many resources is critical for people in every

(Continued on page 4)

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Jamaica Pond offers common ground for the neighborhood's diverse population.

Planning Process Will Produce Report on City's Future Options

Boston 400 aims to connect the people of Boston to the resources of the city by defining a long-term planning agenda that will protect and enhance Boston's qualities as a livable city.

To prosper into the next century, Boston needs to build on four major qualities that make it distinctive. Boston is widely recognized to be:

- A city of neighborhoods.
- A vital natural environment.
- A cultural and learning center.
- The hub of transportation and employment for New England.

To pursue these goals, Boston needs to provide a quality physical infrastructure, an excellent public education for school-age residents, and housing for people of all income levels. Boston 400's role is to focus on the physical city — streets and sidewalks, parks and open spaces, residential areas, transit, schools and public buildings, Downtown and neighborhood business districts, museums and other cultural attractions, environmental quality, and the physical components of our housing and school systems.

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Gateway to Boston

The intersection of Huntington and South Huntington Avenues makes for an unsightly and congested gateway from Brookline. Develop a traffic plan to mitigate circulation problems involving the E-train, buses, and cars. Redesign the streetscape to connect many vibrant communities. Repair the break in the Emerald Necklace bicycle paths at the Riverway.

Heath Street T area

This site on the edge of Jamaica Plain and Mission Hill offers great potential. Restore residential density with nearby retail. Develop a plan that includes opportunities for retail establishments that serve T riders and Veterans Administration (VA) hospital employees. Develop the parking lot adjacent to the VA hospital as a park. Improve the edges of the hospital property.

Southwest Corridor

The Southwest Corridor park has proved a strong addition to the City's open space system. But because of Columbus Avenue's heavy traffic, the corridor does not realize its potential as a "seam" to connect communities. Develop a community-based strategy for pedestrian crossings, housing and commercial development, and maintenance of T stations.

McLaughlin Park

The park is Mission Hill's central site for recreation, with a great view of Boston's skyline. Redesign park tiers to relate better to each other and nearby wilds. Enhance inside and outside paths. Design better sightlines and vistas. Install amenities (bulletin boards, public toilets, bubblers). Preserve the Meadow as a critical piece of the Park.

Tremont Street and the Ledge Site

This strategically located commercial site offers great potential to connect Longwood institutions, Brigham Circle businesses, and the neighborhood. Transit stations at each end, the new Ledge Site development, a captive market at the Longwood Medical Area, many public institutions, and a legacy of mixed-use development offer the base for a vibrant boulevard. Continue efforts to attract an anchor store to the site. Utilizing the recently awarded \$75,000 Browne Fund grant, enhance the Upper Ledge seven-acre wilds area. Link the development to an expanded Avenue of the Arts.

Forest Hills area

The area around the Forest Hills T station is a hodge-podge — but could be a model community that integrates green space, residences, businesses, and transit. Beginning with station improvements, foster a vibrant mixed-use district. Exploit the presence of commuter, park, and residential traffic by encouraging a mix of businesses on South and Washington Streets and Hyde Park Avenue. Increase the area's residential density with upper-floor apartment rehabs. Create better links to the area's signature green spaces, the Arnold Arboretum and Franklin Park.

Avenue of the Arts

The designation of Huntington Avenue as Boston's cultural district should extend to both ends of the boulevard — Copley Square on the north and the intersection of Huntington and South Huntington Avenues on the south. Signage and informational maps are critical to orienting people in the area. Use traffic calming and bicycle lanes to allow more people to visit the Avenue safely. Explore the possibility of building artist co-ops at Huntington/South Huntington or Heath Street to complete the Avenue's identity to the end.

Jamaica Plain, Mission Hill, and Roxbury

Washington Street

Boston's historic commercial boulevard now has the momentum to truly be the city's "Main Street for the 21st Century." Building on the Washington Street Charette process, develop "urban villages" along the corridor with stores along the street level and homes above. Emphasize major nodes such as Dudley Square, Egleston Square, and Forest Hills. Create stronger cross connections with the Southwest Corridor park and T stations. Ensure that development emphasizes sufficient density, effective transit, and human-scale pedestrian spaces.

Egleston-Jackson

Urban Edge, a successful community development corporation, has identified the Columbus Avenue corridor between Egleston and Jackson Squares as a major priority. This corridor is a critical connection between Jamaica Plain and Roxbury. As general plans progress to specific designs, insist that developers adhere to strict design guidelines for building fronts, setbacks, sidewalk spaces and parking. Pursue an "infill" strategy to redevelop vacant parcels. Seek opportunities to build parks and playgrounds.

Dudley Square

With the pending location of the state Department of Public Health in the square, this historic area will have an anchor to spur long-term business and housing development. Residents and City officials are developing plans for a neighborhood "peace park." Residents support development of housing in the area to foster a sense of "ownership" of the Square. Meanwhile, plans continue for the Silver Line. The new MBTA service will make Dudley a critical portal to Downtown and to the City's outlying neighborhoods.

Information centers

Despite rich offerings for dining, recreation, and culture, these neighborhoods often seem confusing to visitors. Install legible maps, transit schedules and other information at kiosks strategically located at subway stops, major bus stops, and business district centers. Use an easily identifiable symbol to mark these spaces at locations across the city.

Neighborhood parks

Parks play a crucial role in community pride and identity, but many areas of Roxbury and nearby communities have inadequate space for recreation. In the underserved areas — especially Jackson Square, Egleston Square and other parts of Roxbury — develop strategies to acquire space and integrate into well-defined "emerald bracelets" of interconnected parks.

Mixed-income housing

Jamaica Plain, Mission Hill, and Roxbury residents have expressed the need for efforts to develop housing that allows for a mixed-income community. In communities with disproportionate numbers of low-income and rental households, middle-class home ownership is a high priority. Housing development must be at the center of community building strategies.

Hyde/Jackson

The mixed-use district between Hyde and Jackson Squares feels disconnected from the Jackson Square T stop. Develop a strategy for traffic calming and orienting people to public transportation. Improve building facades and public spaces. Widen sidewalks, install benches, and offer incentives to rehab historic structures. Seek locations for new lot lots.



Transit lines

Jamaica Plain and Mission Hill residents have long discussed restoring service of the Green Line's E trunk from Heath Street to Forest Hills. Resolve the issue and either restore service or pull up the tracks. Allow free transfers between the 39 bus and the Green Line E trains at all stops between Heath Street and Copley. Roxbury residents have waited for service restoration since the dismantling of the elevated train down Washington Street. Explore options for extending the proposed Silver Line from Dudley Square, down Warren Street and Blue Hill Avenue to Mattapan Square.

Franklin Park access

Access to the Park — a critical resource for Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, and other communities — is too car-oriented. The Park is served by limited bus service and no rapid transit, and bicycle and pedestrian access is difficult. Operate a parks shuttle to connect the Park to the Orange Line. Enhance pedestrian connections between the Green Street T stop and the Glen Road park entrance. Establish coherent signage. Work with the "Green Heart" initiative to foster links with Arnold Arboretum, Boston Nature Center, Forest Hills Cemetery and other natural spaces.

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Thank you for your input.



With Silver Line service, Dudley Station figures to be a center of development in Roxbury.

BOSTON 400th UPDATE

Mayor Thomas M. Menino, City of Boston

Winter 1998-99

Neighborhoods Set Planning Priorities

Residents, Businesses Call for Better Links To Resources of City

Boston 400, the City's comprehensive planning initiative, has developed planning priorities designed to create seamless connections between neighborhoods and natural, cultural, and educational opportunities.

These priorities, which emerged from more than 150 community meetings across the city, will guide planning and development as the City nears its 400th anniversary in 2030. At the direction of mayor Thomas M. Menino, the Boston Redevelopment Authority is coordinating Boston 400 among City agencies.

To realize the vision of "the city as a natural environment," Boston 400 has called for greater access to the Boston Harbor and Harbor Islands, completion of the restoration of the Emerald Necklace, enhanced systems of neighborhood parks, and initiatives to achieve environmental justice.

Well-defined and connected natural resources create the foundation for other efforts, such as initiatives to connect community facilities to common civic spaces, special programs to link families and children to cultural and educational opportunities, and new efforts to improve school buildings and other public facilities throughout the city.

Multi-modal transportation and strong standards of streetscape and urban design will support all of these efforts. Boston 400 will call for expanded public transit options, enhanced pedestrian spaces, and a seamless bicycle network.

Throughout the community planning process, which began in September 1997, residents urged Boston 400 to devise strategies to take better advantage of existing assets. Those assets include Boston Harbor and the city's five rivers, a world-class park system, a diverse economy, and vast cultural and historic resources.

People who attended community meetings urged Boston 400 to undertake a number of initiatives:

Citywide Parks and Natural Spaces. One of the top goals for Boston 400 is to develop complete access for all people to Boston Harbor and to the new Boston Harbor Islands National Park. Residents have called for the deployment of special transit loops to provide access to the Harbor for neighborhoods traditionally under-served by public transportation like Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan.

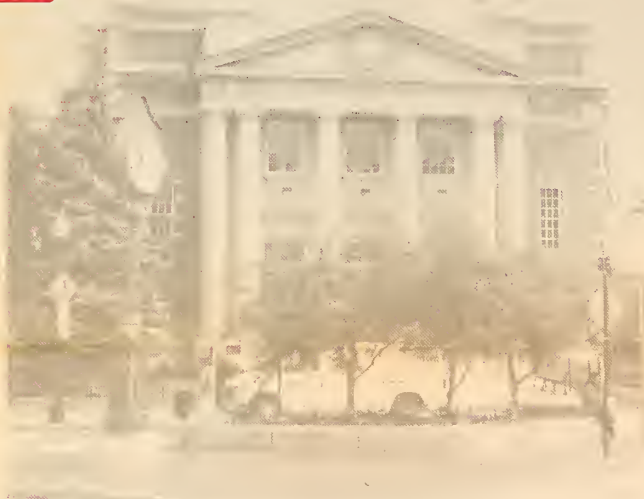
Other citywide parks and natural spaces — such as Franklin Park, the Neponset River Greenway, and Charles River Reservation — also need creative transportation and planning efforts to be connected to Boston's neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Parks and Natural Spaces. Boston 400 also will recommend a major effort to create "emerald bracelets" — seamless systems that link neighborhood parks with other community resources, such as schools, libraries, community centers, historic and cultural resources, and business districts.

Most neighborhoods already have important parks within walking distance of residents. The "emerald bracelets" will help to extend the ease of access to larger stretches of the neighborhood through such design elements as signage, landscaping, and stairs and other pathways. In addition to these improvements, the City will consider which communities require acquisition of new park spaces. Through these initiatives, the City will help communities express their unique identities.

Transportation Connections. Ease of access to the city's many resources is critical for people in every

(Continued on page 4)



The Hyde Park Community Center provides a focal point for Logan Square.

Planning Process Will Produce Report on City's Future Options

Boston 400 aims to connect the people of Boston to the resources of the city by defining a long-term planning agenda that will protect and enhance Boston's qualities as a livable city.

To prosper into the next century, Boston needs to build on four major qualities that make it distinctive. Boston is widely recognized to be:

- A city of neighborhoods.
- A vital natural environment.
- A cultural and learning center.
- The hub of transportation and employment for New England.

To pursue these goals, Boston needs to provide a quality physical infrastructure, an excellent public education for school-age residents, and housing for people of all income levels. Boston 400's role is to focus on the physical city — streets and sidewalks, parks and open spaces, residential areas, transit, schools and public buildings, Downtown and neighborhood business districts, museums and other cultural attractions, environmental quality, and the physical components of our housing and school systems.

Boston 400 coordinated an extensive process of public engagement to define the goals and strategies to guide the City to its 400th anniversary in 2030. The centerpiece of the process was a series of more than 150

community meetings at neighborhoods throughout the city, which involved more than 1,000 people.

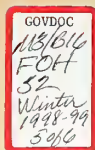
Once the first phase of community meetings was completed in June of 1998, Boston 400 created several working committees to synthesize the material gathered in the neighborhoods and gather additional information from community leaders and professionals.

Five of the committees explored planning opportunities for the critical spaces and systems of the city: Parks and Natural Spaces, Transportation Connections, Housing Opportunities, Downtown Center of Activity, and Cultural and Historic Resources.

Three other committees — Streetscape and Urban Design, Employment and Economic Development, and Spaces for Families and Children — are developing guidelines to be used for future development in Boston.

From now until the spring, the BRA will solicit ideas about which projects should get top priority. Those ideas will be incorporated into later planning documents including Boston 400's initial report to the city.

The report planned for next year — tentatively titled *Connecting the City and Its People: A Boston 400 Report on Planning Options for the Next Generation* — will be the subject of several spring forums where Bostonians can again contribute to the process.



Here is what we've heard so far . . .

Since last year, residents of Boston's neighborhoods have gathered in public meetings to express their visions to guide the City to its 400th anniversary in 2030. These two pages offer a sampling of those suggestions. We invite residents and merchants to keep the conversation going. Take a few minutes to look over these ideas, and tell us what you think. Join your neighbors and be a part of planning the City for its next generation.

Public facilities

At the heart of any healthy community are libraries, community centers, schools, and other public buildings that make a statement about civic values. These buildings should strengthen connections between different public spaces, providing broad access and efficiency. Insist that these buildings be connected with each other and parks and lively public spaces.

Cummins Highway

Cummins Highway offers a direct connection between Roslindale Village and the Mattapan Square / Neponset River area. Build on the presence of the river and redesign the highway to be a parkway. Include in the design a bicycle lane, wider sidewalks, and safe pedestrian crossings. Use signage to orient people both to Roslindale and Mattapan resources.

Gardner Street park

The development of the former landfill on Gardner Street into a park is an exciting opportunity. Transportation to the park may be difficult for children, pedestrians, and bicyclists, because of the VFW Parkway. Ensure that a comprehensive, multi-modal transportation plan is part of the park planning process. Improve access for both Bostonians and visitors.

MDC parkway system

The Metropolitan District Commission's parkways work well for cars in the West Roxbury and Roslindale area and they are beautiful corridors. However, the paths and sidewalks along the parkways are in disrepair, making it difficult for bicyclists and pedestrians. Develop a multi-use strategy for management and design of all of the MDC Parkway.

Parks and playgrounds

A number of neighborhoods have expressed a need for parks and playgrounds that help define and showcase their community identities. One park that could benefit from redesign for this purpose is Almont Playground in Mattapan. Access to the park is made difficult by poorly marked roads, and the park lacks clear entrances and well-designed play spaces. Link Almont Playground to the Neponset with a green corridor and improved signage along Blue Hill Avenue. Redesign the park's edges. Include a more interactively designed play space akin to that at Ryan Playground in Mattapan.

Commuter Rail, public transit

MBTA Commuter Rail service to and from these communities is excellent for serving the commuter population in the neighborhoods with predictable, short weekday trips. But service is reduced or nonexistent on weekends, so the lines are not useful for off-peak trips. Consider converting the Fairmount Line, which runs from Readville to South Station, to a light rail line that runs seven days a week on a typical subway schedule. Establish a public transportation special events shuttle that stops at all of the neighborhood centers. Expand weekend service.

The 'Green Heart'

The new Boston Nature Center offers an opportunity to rethink critical issues about access to green spaces in the heart of the city, including Franklin Park, the Arnold Arboretum, and nearby cemeteries. These parks and natural spaces need to be accessible by foot, public transit, and bicycle in addition to by car. Develop a cooperative planning process with the major stakeholders. Put public transportation at the center of the discussion. Plan for the summer events that have large impacts on the parks themselves and surrounding neighborhoods.

Tot lots, small parks

Neighborhood residents say there are not enough small parks and tot lots within walking distance of their homes. Trends indicate that the populations of the neighborhoods are shifting as elderly homeowners and tenants give way to more families with children. Establish a citywide standard for residential proximity to parks and open spaces, with particular attention to spaces suitable for children. Inventory possible sites for tot lots and small play spaces, and determine appropriate locations for new play spaces in each neighborhood.

MBTA bus lines

Bus access to the area is limited, and transfers are awkward. Study travel needs along American Legion Highway. Improve access to key nodes like Forest Hills and Roxbury Community College. Determine bus routes that would support development of key neighborhood corridors. Provide benches, shelters, and bus schedules at bus stops. Consider dedicated bus lanes on Blue Hill Avenue, at least during rush hour. Examine the success of the new Silver Line to determine its appropriateness for Blue Hill Avenue.

Business districts

Outside major employment centers like Downtown and the Longwood Medical Area, the economic and social health of Boston turns on the strength of neighborhood business districts like Cleary and Logan Squares, Mattapan Square, Roslindale Village, Centre Street in West Roxbury, and Forest Hills. Above and beyond the City's successful Boston Main Streets program, these districts need strong design standards and transit connections, as well as incentives for a wide range of merchants to locate their businesses in the neighborhoods.

Historic renovations

The neighborhoods boast many graceful old houses and buildings that, in places, have been allowed to deteriorate. With aggressive infill, these structures could form the backbone of revitalization along Blue Hill Avenue, Washington Street, and Cummins Highway. Set clear and strict standards and incentives for revitalizing the City's historic structures.

H.P. community campus

The proximity of the branch library, YMCA, community center, Rogers School, Hyde Park Health Center, Most Precious Blood School, Academy of the Pacific Rim, and Hyde Park High School should foster better physical links to create a "Hyde Park community campus." Encourage physical pathways to support collaborative efforts between organizations.

Traffic and parking

Traffic in the major business centers — Roslindale Village; Centre Street, West Roxbury; Mattapan Square; Cleary and Logan Squares, Hyde Park — disrupts commercial activity. Encourage more commuters to use Commuter Rail service. Establish strict design standards for parking. Emphasize community character and streetscape design instead of parking.

Water management

During the summer, the Neponset River's flow is greatly reduced due to regional water-use patterns. Develop plans to address sewage, dams, fencing, and water usage. Consider forming a group modeled after the Muddy River Action Group. Without a broad coalition, it will be difficult to develop a workable plan to develop the riverway's full potential.



Neighborhood 'Emerald Bracelets'

Hyde Park is ringed by some of Boston's largest parks and natural spaces that form an "emerald bracelet." Unlike Frederick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace, however, the parks are poorly linked. Identify sites that would offer better connections between Stony Brook Reservation, the Neponset River greenway, Ross Playground, Camp Meigs Park, and the George Wright Golf Course. Promote neighborhood parks connections so every neighborhood has access to intertwined links ("Emerald Bracelets") in the larger system of parks ("the Emerald Necklace").

Housing for elderly

Residents have voiced concerns that there is not enough affordable housing for the elderly in West Roxbury. Determine a strategy for developing affordable housing for older people of all income levels. Establish policy recommendations that take into account the growing percentage of the population that is older than age 65 (by 2010 approximately 25 percent of the national population will be over 65 years old). Pursue opportunities to develop pilot projects that include housing for elderly among "family housing" to facilitate intermingling of people of all ages.

Neponset River

The Metropolitan District Commission's master plan outlines a strategy for development of the Neponset River as a major site for bicycling, boating, hiking, and programmed events. The plan covers the Neponset from Central Avenue in Mattapan out to Boston Harbor, but not the segment that runs through Hyde Park. Develop plans for paths and amenities on both sides of the river from Central Avenue through Hyde Park. Foster connections to the riverway from Roslindale Village, Forest Hills, Cleary Square, Mattapan Square, and other neighborhood centers.

Add to the agenda

We want your input. To comment on the ideas presented here — or any aspect of the City's comprehensive planning process — call us, write us, fax us, or e-mail us. Our contact information is listed on page 4 of this document.

Planning Process Begins With Community

From the very beginning, Boston 400 has developed a wide range of vehicles for Bostonians to provide input into the City's first comprehensive planning process since 1965.

The Boston 400 process began in 1997, when Mayor Thomas M. Menino directed the Boston Redevelopment Authority to seek the involvement of all of the city's neighborhoods in identifying issues and opportunities for the next generation.

As Boston 400 planners fanned out into the neighborhoods, the BRA also formed a task force and engaged other City agencies in the discussions about long-term planning priorities.

Starting last fall, Boston 400 conducted close to 150 meetings in all of the city's neighborhoods, attracting over 1,000 participants. These meetings attracted a wide range of residents and merchants — including many who had never participated in community planning processes before — and set the agenda for BRA planners and the Boston 400 Task Force.

The neighborhood meetings addressed a wide range of topics, depending on the wishes of the people in attendance. The topics included: parks as recreational spaces, environmental systems, public transit, traffic congestion, housing development, commercial development, museums and other cultural sites, reuse of abandoned properties, access and development of water resources, signage, and university and medical spaces.

While expressing creative visions for the neighborhoods, residents also looked for ways to make connections with the rest of the city. Residents have called for major new investments in public transit, parks and natural spaces, cultural resources, economic development, streetscape, and other systems and services that serve the whole city.

The task force includes a wide range of civic and community leaders. The task force met monthly in 1997 and the spring of 1998 to explore a broad range of planning issues, and also heard from a number of guest speakers on issues such as the changing demographics of Boston and planning strategies of other cities in the U.S. and Europe. Meetings were open to the public and attracted many Bostonians who were not task force members.

This past summer, Boston 400 broke up the task force into eight working committees to sift through the issues raised in the neighborhood meetings.

Five committees address spaces and systems of the city: Parks and Natural Spaces, Transportation Connections, Housing Opportunities, Downtown, and Cultural and Historic Resources. Three other committees are developing guidelines for planning throughout the city: Streetscape and Urban Design, Employment and Economic Development, and Spaces for Families and Children.

Boston 400 has worked with the Departments of Parks and Recreation, Transportation, and Neighborhood Development, the Boston Landmarks Commission, and several other City departments. Members of the Boston City Council have played an active role in meetings throughout the city.

Boston 400 has held a number of public lectures and panel discussions to stimulate public dialogue on the challenges of long-term planning. The Boston 400 Forum attracted a wide range of notable figures in

planning, public policy, and community affairs. Former U.S. Labor Secretary Robert Reich gave the opening address on the economic challenges facing Boston in the 21st century. Reich emphasized Boston's opportunity to exploit its education, medical, and research sectors to provide good jobs at good wages for people of all backgrounds in the city.

Other speakers included Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; Stephen Jay Gould, a leading scientist at Harvard University; directors of the Boston Redevelopment Authority from Edward Logue to Thomas N. O'Brien; author James Carroll; and Stanley Lowe, Director of the Pittsburgh Housing Authority.

Boston 400 has also reached out to specific groups in the community. Boston 400 has attended meetings convened by The Boston Foundation and Sustainable Boston, which aim to devise measurements of community progress on a wide range of issues. Boston 400 has worked with youth in conjunction with Boston Community Centers and other educational programs.

Boston 400 has a site on the Internet so that residents and others can read about neighborhood planning priorities and access other information.



Washington Street in Roslindale Village.

Boston 400 Identifies Citywide Initiatives

(Continued from page 1)

neighborhood of the city. Working with consultants, Boston 400 will develop strategies for expanding transit options, especially for under-served communities and for cultural and recreational activities that attract their greatest crowds during off-peak hours.

In addition, Boston 400 will develop strategies for reducing the impact of commuters and other regional traffic on neighborhoods. Traffic calming measures and rerouting of regional traffic are needed to allow neighborhoods the opportunity to protect and enhance their own local resources and character. In addition, efforts are needed to spur development at major transit nodes to reduce the need for cars in the city.

Cultural and Historic Resources. Boston 400 will establish major initiatives to connect the city's cultural and historic assets to the neighborhoods. Proposals include new transit loops, enhanced streetscape design and landscaping, incentives for building facade improvements, better designs for schools and other civic buildings, and more performance and display spaces in the neighborhoods. The goal is to create places where people of all ages can take full advantage of community resources.

Planning is already underway for systems of collaboration among museums and other cultural institutions. The efforts might include discount tickets, maps, and information displays.

Downtown Center of Activity. Working with existing plans and efforts, Boston 400 will devise creative approaches to enhance the major streets and focal points of the Downtown. Boston 400 will also work with community and business groups to ensure that as parks and cultural spaces are designed and developed on the Central Artery, connections to the Downtown are made to enhance its historic character, pedestrian environment, and economic opportunities.

Housing Opportunities. Boston 400 has under-

taken an analysis of long-term housing needs in the city and what funding tools and creative initiatives might be used to confront the problem of affordable housing in the city.

Streetscape and Urban Design. To ensure that Boston retains its urban character as it develops new economic and housing opportunities, Boston 400 has worked with architects and planners to identify principles of good urban design. Community leaders, developers, business people, and others have been involved in reviewing these principles.

Boston 400's streetscape and urban design committee will also participate in efforts to develop design guidelines for new schools and civic buildings.

Employment and Economic Development. Boston 400 will undertake a citywide inventory and analysis of the goods and services that are in short supply in the neighborhoods — as well as those which are in danger of being oversupplied. These studies will be used to devise programs for job training, local economic development, and long-term infrastructure planning.

Another economic development priority is the development of "incubators" for emerging businesses and technologies. Incubators would provide spaces for research, management, and even manufacturing, as well as "one-stop shopping" for essential services such as legal and accounting assistance.

For a complete review of issues and opportunities identified by residents of all of Boston's neighborhoods, refer to the Boston 400 web page on the Internet at www.ci.boston.ma.us/boston400/boston400.htm.

Please Tell Us What You Think

Boston 400 needs your input on planning issues in the months ahead.

Please read this issue of *Boston 400 Update*, including the annotated map on pages 2 and 3. Other versions of this *Update* provide overviews of the priorities of other clusters of neighborhoods. You can receive copies by contacting Boston 400.

Boston 400 has also prepared sets of maps and demographic data and summaries of neighborhood meetings for all of the City's neighborhoods. Copies can be obtained by contacting Boston 400.

Once you have read the Boston 400 materials, contact us to tell us your priorities for planning for Boston's next generation.

You can reach us in several ways:

Write: Boston 400/BRA
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201-1007
Call: (617) 918-4338
Fax: (617) 367-6087
E-mail: boston400.bra@ci.boston.ma.us

Thank you for your input.



Gracious homes on tree-lined street of West Roxbury.

BOSTON UPDATE

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Winter 1998-99

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Elegant apartments are part of a broad mix of housing types in Allston and Brighton.

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Urban Ring

The possible construction of the circumferential transit system — which would link East Boston, Charlestown, Somerville, Cambridge, Brookline, Longwood, Dudley, northern Dorchester, and South Boston — would create important new connections to Fenway. Insist that connections to the Longwood Medical and Academic Area be a major priority.

Harvard Avenue

Harvard Avenue is the major roadway connection between Jamaica Plain, Brookline, Brighton, Allston, and Cambridge. Traffic is always heavy, and the Harvard Street bus from Dudley to Harvard Square is one of Boston's busiest routes. Implement a traffic reduction plan and build on Urban Ring study efforts. Consider adoption of rush-hour traffic strategies.

Rail yards

Parts of the Conrail Freight Yard and the Roma Transportation Yard are either underutilized or not utilized at all. Consider alternative uses for the lands, including industrial development. Develop a plan for that area and for other potential industrial sites throughout Boston. Concentrate on transit and other linkages to integrate these spaces into the rest of the City.

Cleveland Circle

Cleveland Circle has the potential to be one of the City's best urban villages. However, Cleveland Circle is dominated by autos and poses pedestrian safety problems. Redesign the intersection of Chestnut Hill Avenue and Beacon Street with traffic-calming measures, pedestrian amenities, mixed-use incentives, human-scale lighting, and appropriate trees and greenery.

Open water resources

The Chestnut Hill Reservoir and pumping station are assets to the neighborhood and city. At some point, the reservoir will no longer be an emergency water source, and the site could be redeveloped as a "new Jamaica Pond." Chandler Pond is currently underutilized due to a half-complete boardwalk, maintenance issues, and storm-water drainage problems. Develop a master recreational and environmental plan. Restore streams that flow from Chandler Pond to the Charles River and establish a greenway that links the two with pedestrian and bicycle recreation paths.

Green Line B trunk / public transit

Service along the B line is slow during the daytime and unreliable in the evening. Extend service hours and increase frequency of T runs. Recapture the original feeling of Commonwealth Avenue with development of a pedestrian mall from Kenmore Square to Boston College. Study the proper number of stops along the route to maximize the quality of service. Pursue the development of additional cross-town bus routes with relatively few stops and direct connections to existing rapid transit lines. Post bus schedules at bus shelters along all routes.

Lincoln Street / Mass Pike

The Massachusetts Turnpike splits Allston, leaving residents on the north isolated from business districts. Better streetscape design and coordinated development of nearby vacant parcels can begin to give the area a sense of coherence and excitement. Improve streetscape to make better connections across the Cambridge Street overpass. Focus on lighting, signage, and sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities. Create a greenway along Lincoln Street and the rail yards, with connections to the Charles River.

Charles River access

Soldiers Field Road, Storrow Drive, and interchanges such as the Bowker Overpass create obstacles for people trying to get to the Charles River and the Esplanade. Only a comprehensive transportation plan — which addresses concerns about commuter traffic, air rights development, transit, and mixed-use development in nearby neighborhoods — can open the river to nearby communities. Consider proposals to move Storrow Drive south, away from the river, in Allston/Brighton, to create space for an Esplanade extension.

Massachusetts Turnpike

The spaces above the Mass Pike offer great opportunities to reweave the fabric of the city, but development needs to be appropriate to the scale and character of the neighborhoods. Development should dovetail with efforts to reduce auto congestion throughout the City. Work with the new Citizens' Advisory Committee, appointed by the Mayor of Boston and the state Secretary of Transportation, to develop a master plan for longterm development of the "air rights" over the Pike.

Charles River

Connecting Allston / Brighton to Back Bay, the Charles River is a vital piece of the park system and the transportation network. The Metropolitan District Commission conducted a visioning process and released a draft report last September. Ensure that the final plan provides for maintenance of all areas along the Charles. Develop stronger connections to the Muddy River. Continue discussions about the enhancement of the Bowker Overpass area including the Muddy River and the park at Charlesgate East on Commonwealth Avenue.

Avenue of the Arts

Working under the auspices of the Fenway Alliance, the City has designated Huntington Avenue the Avenue of the Arts. Continue the planning with particular attention to the needs of pedestrians. Develop a consensus for extending the avenue in ways that enhance the street's identity while allowing other districts (e.g., Longwood) to maintain their identity as well.

Audubon Circle

This residential area has been overwhelmed by automobile traffic and cut off by the Massachusetts Turnpike overpass. Nearby development of Landmark Center threatens more congestion. Implement a major traffic-control plan and develop strategies for residential development. Recreate a focal point to create the sense of place once offered by the turnabout.

New public schools

The Boston Arts Academy and Fenway High School offer innovative programs to children from all neighborhoods of the City. These schools give the community an opportunity to embrace youth issues and enhance the neighborhood's character. Create connections with local community organizations and institutions to take advantage of the opportunity.

Longwood transit

The Longwood Medical and Academic Area needs better transit links. The D line location and E line frequency are both problematic. Shuttles to Longwood should stop at the Kenmore and Ruggles T stops. Study Longwood traffic and transit in relation to larger traffic demands of the city and the metropolitan area. Consider more service at Yawkey Station.



Open water resources

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Yawkey and Fenway T stations

The Yawkey T station, on the Framingham / Worcester commuter rail line, is strategically located near Longwood and Kenmore Square, and could offer another alternative to commuters from the western suburbs to the Longwood Medical and Academic Area. Utilize the stop year-round instead of just for service to 81 Red Sox games at Fenway Park. The Fenway T station on the Green Line D trunk is unattractive and feels dangerous. Support redesign efforts to ensure that the station provides better service to the Landmark Center and Boylston Street shops.

Back Bay Fens / Muddy River

The Fens is a park with many complicated uses and connections. Residents have been concerned about pathways and lighting, dilapidated buildings, overgrown reeds in the Muddy River, and the safety and enjoyment of people using the park. The Muddy River is not safe or accessible for recreation or passive enjoyment. Build upon the Muddy River Action Group's work to develop a comprehensive strategy, with a focus on controlling the reeds, reopening covered river segments, improving water quality, and preventing local flooding.

Brookline Avenue / Boylston Street

Brookline Avenue serves as a major connector from the Boylston intersection at the Landmark Center, past Fenway Park, to Kenmore Square. The street is unsightly, offers inadequate space for bicyclists and pedestrians, and feels dangerous to all. Widen sidewalks, and set standards for signage and building facades to improve the feel of the street. For Boylston Street, traffic-calming, streetscape enhancement, control of signage, development of vacant spaces, and buffering of parking and other open lots, have all been suggested remedies to the current situation.

Add to the agenda

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The Boston 400 process began in 1997, when Mayor Thomas M. Menino directed the Boston Redevelopment Authority to seek the involvement of all of the city's neighborhoods in identifying issues and opportunities for the next generation.

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The neighborhood meetings addressed a wide range of topics, depending on the wishes of the people in attendance. The topics included: parks as recreational spaces, environmental systems, public transit, traffic congestion, housing development, commercial development, museums and other cultural sites, reuse of abandoned properties, access and development of water resources, signage, and university and medical spaces.

While expressing creative visions for the neighborhoods, residents also looked for ways to make connections with the rest of the city. Residents have called for major new investments in public transit, parks and natural spaces, cultural resources, economic development, streetscape, and other systems and services that serve the whole city.

The task force includes a wide range of civic and community leaders. The task force met monthly in 1997 and the spring of 1998 to explore a broad range of planning issues, and also heard from a number of guest speakers on issues such as the changing demographics of Boston and planning strategies of other cities in the U.S. and Europe. Meetings were open to the public and attracted many Bostonians who were not task force members.

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Five committees address spaces and systems of the city: Parks and Natural Spaces, Transportation Connections, Housing Opportunities, Downtown, and Cultural and Historic Resources. Three other committees are developing guidelines for planning throughout the city: Streetscape and Urban Design, Employment and Economic Development, and Spaces for Families and Children.

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Cultural and Historic Resources. Boston 400 will establish major initiatives to connect the city's cultural and historic assets to the neighborhoods. Proposals include new transit loops, enhanced streetscape design and landscaping, incentives for building facade improvements, better designs for schools and other civic buildings, and more performance and display spaces in the neighborhoods. The goal is to create places where people of all ages can take full advantage of community resources.

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Streetscape and Urban Design. To ensure that Boston retains its urban character as it develops new economic and housing opportunities, Boston 400 has worked with architects and planners to identify principles of good urban design. Community leaders, developers, business people, and others have been involved in reviewing these principles.

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You can reach us in several ways:

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Fax: (617) 367-6087
E-mail: boston400.bra@ci.boston.ma.us

Thank you for your input.



The Back Bay Fens offers a picturesque backdrop for the Museum of Fine Arts

1630 - 2030
BOSTON 400 UPDATE

Mayor Thomas M. Menino, City of Boston

Winter 1998-99

Neighborhoods Set Planning Priorities

Residents, Businesses Call for Better Links To Resources of City

Boston 400, the City's comprehensive planning initiative, has developed planning priorities designed to create seamless connections between neighborhoods and natural, cultural, and educational opportunities.

These priorities, which emerged from more than 150 community meetings across the city, will guide planning and development as the City nears its 400th anniversary in 2030. At the direction of mayor Thomas M. Menino, the Boston Redevelopment Authority is coordinating Boston 400 among City agencies.

To realize the vision of "the city as a natural environment," Boston 400 has called for greater access to the Boston Harbor and Harbor Islands, completion of the restoration of the Emerald Necklace, enhanced systems of neighborhood parks, and initiatives to achieve environmental justice.

Well-defined and connected natural resources create the foundation for other efforts, such as initiatives to connect community facilities to common civic spaces, special programs to link families and children to cultural and educational opportunities, and new efforts to improve school buildings and other public facilities throughout the city.

Multi-modal transportation and strong standards of streetscape and urban design will support all of these efforts. Boston 400 will call for expanded public transit options, enhanced pedestrian spaces, and a seamless bicycle network.

Throughout the community planning process, which began in September 1997, residents urged Boston 400 to devise strategies to take better advantage of existing assets. Those assets include Boston Harbor and the city's five rivers, a world-class park system, a diverse economy, and vast cultural and historic resources.

People who attended community meetings urged Boston 400 to undertake a number of initiatives:

Citywide Parks and Natural Spaces. One of the top goals for Boston 400 is to develop complete access for all people to Boston Harbor and to the new Boston Harbor Islands National Park. Residents have called for the deployment of special transit loops to provide access to the Harbor for neighborhoods traditionally under-served by public transportation like Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan.

Other citywide parks and natural spaces — such as Franklin Park, the Neponset River Greenway, and Charles River Reservation — also need creative transportation and planning efforts to be connected to Boston's neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Parks and Natural Spaces. Boston 400 also will recommend a major effort to create "emerald bracelets" — seamless systems that link neighborhood parks with other community resources, such as schools, libraries, community centers, historic and cultural resources, and business districts.

Most neighborhoods already have important parks within walking distance of residents. The "emerald bracelets" will help to extend the ease of access to larger stretches of the neighborhood through such design elements as signage, landscaping, and stairs and other pathways. In addition to these improvements, the City will consider which communities require acquisition of new park spaces. Through these initiatives, the City will help communities express their unique identities.

Transportation Connections. Ease of access to the city's many resources is critical for people in every
(Continued on page 4)



The old Baker Chocolate Factory anchors development along the Neponset River.

Planning Process Will Produce Report on City's Future Options

Boston 400 aims to connect the people of Boston to the resources of the city by defining a long-term planning agenda that will protect and enhance Boston's qualities as a livable city.

To prosper into the next century, Boston needs to build on four major qualities that make it distinctive. Boston is widely recognized to be:

- A city of neighborhoods.
- A vital natural environment.
- A cultural and learning center.
- The hub of transportation and employment for New England.

To pursue these goals, Boston needs to provide a quality physical infrastructure, an excellent public education for school-age residents, and housing for people of all income levels. Boston 400's role is to focus on the physical city — streets and sidewalks, parks and open spaces, residential areas, transit, schools and public buildings, Downtown and neighborhood business districts, museums and other cultural attractions, environmental quality, and the physical components of our housing and school systems.

Boston 400 coordinated an extensive process of public engagement to define the goals and strategies to guide the City to its 400th anniversary in 2030. The centerpiece of the process was a series of more than 150

community meetings at neighborhoods throughout the city, which involved more than 1,000 people.

Once the first phase of community meetings was completed in June of 1998, Boston 400 created several working committees to synthesize the material gathered in the neighborhoods and gather additional information from community leaders and professionals.

Five of the committees explored planning opportunities for the critical spaces and systems of the city: Parks and Natural Spaces, Transportation Connections, Housing Opportunities, Downtown Center of Activity, and Cultural and Historic Resources.

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Here is what we've heard so far. . .

Since last year, residents of Boston's neighborhoods have gathered in public meetings to express their visions to guide the City to its 400th anniversary in 2030. These two pages offer a sampling of those suggestions. We invite all residents and merchants to keep the conversation going. Take a few minutes to look over these ideas, and tell us what you think. Join your neighbors and be a part of planning the City for its next generation.

Blue Hill Avenue

One of the city's critical north-south connectors, Blue Hill Avenue is a southern gateway to Boston and a critical entrance to Roxbury. Now dominated by car traffic, the Avenue could be a major mass transit corridor. Redesign the street as a transit boulevard by extending the Silver Line from Dudley Square, down Warren Street, and then down Blue Hill Avenue to Mattapan Square.

Columbia Road

Realize Frederick Law Olmsted's original vision of Columbia Road as the final link in the Emerald Necklace between Franklin Park and Boston Harbor. Over a 30-year period, develop streetscape improvements that emphasize the road's role as a major piece of Boston's city-wide park system. Increase the street's "green" elements and introduce traffic-calming tools.

Franklin Park

Franklin Park is in danger of being "loved to death" by zoo visitors, golfers, festival-goers, and drivers on Circuit Drive. Develop a comprehensive plan that includes design improvements, traffic and parking plans, better transit access, and economic development in surrounding communities. Repair links to Forest Hills and Boston Harbor. Develop systems to coordinate park spaces.

Storefront churches

Because of a lack of development along Dorchester's major boulevards since the 1970's, many churches bought parcels along the boulevards and now dominate many pockets of the City. These churches vitalize the area on weekends but lie dormant other days. Offer incentives to develop "campuses" to foster community use of these facilities, front yards, and parking spaces.

Health centers

Health centers have become the center of community life in Dorchester and other neighborhoods with diverse populations. These centers provide common spaces for families and other residents and social-service providers. Develop incentives for the improvement of public-oriented spaces associated with health centers, similar to the storefront church campus initiative.

Mixed-use districts

Dorchester boasts some of the city's greatest mixed-use districts. To develop these areas, establish strict standards for development of mixed-use districts with an emphasis on small-scale development, pedestrian and transit-oriented streets, close connections between buildings and sidewalks, limited parking located out of view of the street, and better transit service.

Neponset River basin

River Street is critical to the definition of the Neponset River, but residents and visitors often have no idea that they are so close to the river. Consider creation of a river overlay district, with design standards and development incentives and restrictions. Develop a comprehensive strategy to enhance cross streets, and build on efforts at Ryan Playground, Kennedy Playground, Mattapan Square, and Lower Mills. Share information and work with Milton residents and officials.

Links to the Red Line

Red Line service is frequent and reliable, but the relatively low density of Dorchester puts many residents beyond a convenient walking distance to the Red Line stops. Develop a plan for linking the communities of Dorchester to existing Red Line service. Improved access to the existing line could greatly improve overall service for a relatively low cost. Residents say that Savin Hill, Fields Corner, Shawmut, and Ashmont stations all need major redesign.

Urban Ring

To strengthen cross-town transit, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority is considering building a circumferential transit system. Various options include stations at the JFK/UMASS stop on the Red Line, the Upham's Corner stop on the Fairmount Line, and an unspecified stop on the Red Line. Use the Urban Ring to reinforce dense urban activity in Dorchester. Assure that the vehicles for such a system use clean fuels and are attractive elements of the streetscape.

Fairmount Line

The Fairmount Commuter Rail line stops are inconvenient and service is infrequent. Consider converting the Fairmount line from a commuter rail to a rapid transit line. Build more stations along the way. Bus service usage on Blue Hill Avenue and Washington Street and Talbot Avenue suggests a strong demand for rapid transit. A new rapid transit line would strengthen the connections made possible by the urban ring and foster diverse development throughout Dorchester.

Boston Harbor Islands

Recently designated a national park, the islands offer great opportunities for passive and active recreation and historical and environmental education. Provide strong access to the entire Boston shoreline, from all points inland. Develop an economic development plan with opportunities for small enterprises that support island activities. Create attractive signage systems.

Upham's Corner

One of the city's liveliest neighborhood business districts, Upham's Corner has strong base of architecture and public space. Build on the efforts of Main Streets and the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City to improve the district's mixed-use character. Improve transportation access with better bus service and the possible inclusion of Upham's Corner on the Urban Ring.

Codman Square

Codman square is one of Dorchester's great historic settings, with strong community facilities, historic buildings, and a growing mix of businesses. Build on Main Streets initiatives by emphasizing mass transit connections; developing parking areas behind buildings, apart from the street; and enhancing the green spaces in front of the church and at Roberts Park.

Dorchester Avenue

Dorchester's true Main Street, "Oot Ave" offers a wide variety of commercial, residential, cultural, and social-service spaces. Develop a corridor improvement plan that focuses on infill of vacant properties and streetscape improvements that slow traffic. Devise strategies to improve bus movement. Enforce restrictions on double parking and commercial loading activities.

Fields Corner

Fields Corner has the potential to be a major center of activity along Dorchester Avenue. Rebuild the T station and offer incentives for development within a half mile of the station. Improve the borders of the suburban-style shopping center at the Park Street intersection, where a bleak parking lot discourages pedestrian traffic. Build housing on vacant lots.

Shopping centers

All over Dorchester, there are suburban-style shopping centers characterized by several chain stores located in a single building with huge parking lots. These centers undermine the human-scale, historic character of Dorchester. Develop guidelines and incentives for improving the edges of shopping centers, gas stations, and other large-scale enterprises.



Lower Mills

Building on the success of popular shops, condominiums at the Baker Chocolate Factory, and the beautiful setting of the Neponset River, Lower Mills has become a model for community development in Boston. Develop long-term strategies for development of remaining Baker properties, enhancement of Neponset River connections, and damming issues at the Neponset. Develop a comprehensive traffic plan and cooperate with efforts to improve nearby highways.

Adams Village

Adams Village offers a wide range of commercial places and has good car access and fair pedestrian access, but the district has little sense of a center. Strengthen the area's pedestrian environment. Develop long-term standards for redevelopment of properties occupied by large-scale stores. Study traffic on Gallivan Boulevard and Adams Street to devise ways to reduce through traffic. Create signage that orients people to the Village's offerings as well as nearby neighborhoods.

What would you add to the agenda?

We want your input on the longterm future of Dorchester and all of Boston. To comment on the ideas presented here — or any aspect of the City's comprehensive planning process — call us, write us, fax us, or e-mail us. Our contact information is listed on page 4 of this document. If you would like more information about the Boston 400 community planning process, find us on the internet at www.ci.boston.ma.us/boston400/boston400.htm.

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Neighborhood Parks and Natural Spaces. Boston 400 also will recommend a major effort to create "emerald bracelets" — seamless systems of neighborhood parks and other community resources — in each community of Boston.

Most neighborhoods already have important parks within walking distance of residents. But some of these parks are outdated in design because of changes in community makeup and recreation patterns. Over a period of several years, the City should commit to whatever enhancements are necessary to make sure that all communities have well-designed and well-maintained parks that express the identities of their community. Emphasis would be on improvements and connections, but acquisition of new spaces may be necessary.

Transportation Connections. Ease of access to the city's many resources is critical for people in every

(Continued on page 4)



Piers Park offers unparalleled views of Boston's waterfront and skyline.

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Main Street

The focal point of Charlestown's public realm, Main Street needs a better variety of retail, office, and cultural activity. Conduct a marketing study to determine viable businesses. Redesign the Bunker Hill Mall to present an active face to the street. Redesign Mishawam Housing Development to enhance the street's architectural and commercial character.

Charlestown neck

The Charlestown neck area is isolated from the rest of the community by roads that intimidate pedestrians. Heavy traffic on Cambridge Street exacerbates the isolation. Develop streetscape improvements, eliminate the proposed I-93 off-ramp, reroute traffic with the reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue, and reduce the number of curb cuts.

Alleyways

The North End has many alleys that could be developed to enhance and connect the open space system in this densely developed neighborhood. Create a system of landscaped pedestrian walkways (such as Greenough Lane) with improved paving, lighting, and landscaping to connect areas of activity with open space. Mark the spaces with clean, simple signage.

Public facilities

Public restrooms are needed in parks as well as elsewhere in these waterfront communities to serve residents and tourists. Reopen restrooms on the North End's Prado, establish pay toilets at key locations, include public restrooms in the Parcel 7 vent building. Develop an aggressive program to provide street furniture at critical public spaces.

Historic character of North End

As Boston's oldest neighborhood, the North End offers a many-layered story of the City's development from the old Shawmut Peninsula through successive waves of immigration to the mixed-use district of today. Work with Boston Landmarks Commission to protect the North End's historic character, possibly with designation as a historic district. Maintain and enforce the current 55-foot height limit. Develop spaces that celebrate the rich and varied history of the neighborhood. Install orientation kiosks or other spaces that guide newcomers to key sites.

Open space and harbor access

East Boston, formerly islands, boasts a wide range of natural spaces and resources that should form the basis of its physical identity. Residents would like to develop a network of open spaces that would build on existing resources and improve the quality of life in the neighborhoods. This would include developing a Harborwalk trail along the waterfront and building pedestrian connections between the East Boston Greenway and residential areas, as well as upgrading neighborhood parks and recreation spaces and developing a seamless bicycle network.

East Boston master planning

Through many planning efforts, publications, and projects, East Boston residents and merchants have expressed a number of important concerns. The Boston Redevelopment Authority is working with ICON architecture, inc. on a master plan for East Boston that will develop specific implementation strategies. Key issues include land use, open space and public-realm enhancement, infrastructure and transportation improvements, protection of the urban fabric and historic resources, and waterfront and economic development.

Boston 400 Update

Charlestown, East Boston, and North End/Waterfront

East Boston waterfront development

The East Boston Master Plan aims to provide for full utilization of the Inner Harbor waterfront and Chelsea River corridor for commercial, maritime, residential, industrial, and recreational uses. Development of specific strategies is one of the core objectives of the master plan. A related objective is to improve access to and from the waterfront for the neighborhoods and East Boston as a whole. The community is working with Massport to encourage the redevelopment of Pier 1 and nearby land for more intensive use.

East Boston economic development

Economic development in East Boston should be supported with a compatible mix of public and private projects, including housing, retail, office development, industrial activity, and open spaces, which will complement the community as a whole. These spaces should be well-designed and well-connected so that parts reinforce each other. The community also seeks to reinforce the existing commercial and business centers and increase the quality and variety of employment opportunities for residents of East Boston.

New open space

Major highway construction projects provide opportunities to increase open space. Central Artery North Area improvements and proposed Rutherford Avenue reconstruction provide possibilities for new open space along the Charles River, the Mystic River, and in Sullivan and City Squares. Maximize the open space development that is designed specifically for neighborhood use. Study the possibility of developing a hike path along the historic Middlesex Canal route to connect the waterfront system with Charlestown's interior.

Page 3



Dewey Beach

Forty years ago, Charlestown's Dewey Beach was an active spot for recreation on the Mystic River. However, development and industrial activities have polluted the area to dangerous levels. To build on cleanup efforts, establish convenient access to the waterfront. Restore the beach for swimming and add docks for boating. Place historic markers along the water.

Medford Street

Medford Street, Charlestown, is a major interface between a residential community and the commercial and industrial waterfront. Divert trucks off the street to a more appropriate route that reduces the impact of commercial traffic on residents. Redevelop the industrial and commercial properties with adequate landscaping to appropriately conceal industrial activities.

City Square

With the new connection between the Tobin Bridge and Interstate 93, City Square in Charlestown has been rediscovered as a vital mixed-use district. Redevelop the area to create a strong and attractive commercial center that is a gateway for people entering the City from the north. Continue to enhance the pedestrian connections between the square and Downtown Boston.

Salem & Hanover Streets

Salem and Hanover Streets are the focal points of the North End's vibrant mix of community businesses, restaurants, and historic sites. Strengthen the business district by encouraging retail and service uses that serve the local community as well as visitors. Extend Hanover Street to Cambridge Street as part of the development on the depressed Central Artery.

Historic development

Communities throughout Boston treasure the historic character of their neighborhoods — vintage housing, traditional streetscape and civic squares, waterfront access, and parks. Caring for the legacies of the past offers critical ways to build for the future, since it strengthens the organic character of the community. This often requires special efforts to address developers, particularly chain outlets, who operate with "cookie cutter" approaches to construction, parking, and other issues. The North End, Charlestown, and East Boston all could serve as models of historically sensitive development.

Traffic congestion

Charlestown is at the confluence of the regional highway system. This provides the potential for easy access but also the possibility of congestion and through traffic on neighborhood streets. Direct traffic around the neighborhood and onto the proposed Rutherford Avenue bypass and the Medford Street bypass. Work with the Rutherford Avenue planning process to devise new ways of channeling traffic away from residential areas. Shield residents from noisy, disruptive industrial traffic by directing trucks from working port areas to the Interstate highway system.

Access to Boston

One of these neighborhoods' greatest strengths is their close proximity to Downtown Boston, the airport, and the regional transportation system. Strengthen pedestrian connections between City Square and downtown, and from the North End's main corridors to downtown. Ensure that gateways such as City Square, Route 99, Sullivan Square, Maverick Square, Hanover Street, and all water transit access points are welcoming to visitors and residents alike. Emphasize pedestrian, bicycle, and water access; public transportation; streetscape design; and accurate, clear signage.

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While expressing creative visions for the neighborhoods, residents also looked for ways to make connections with the rest of the city. Residents have called for major new investments in public transit, parks and natural spaces, cultural resources, economic development, streetscape, and other systems and services that serve the whole city.

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Charlestown homes recall Colonial days.

Boston 400 Identifies Citywide Initiatives

(Continued from page 1)

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Fax: (617) 367-6087
E-mail: boston400.bra@ci.boston.ma.us

Thank you for your input.



North Ends play basketball within the view of Old Ironsides.

BOSTON UPDATE

Mayor Thomas M. Menino, City of Boston

Winter 1998-99

Neighborhoods Set Planning Priorities

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1 of 6



South Boston and other neighborhoods offer an eclectic array of housing types.

Planning Process Will Produce Report on City's Future Options

Boston 400 aims to connect the people of Boston to the resources of the city by defining a long-term planning agenda that will protect and enhance Boston's qualities as a livable city.

To prosper into the next century, Boston needs to build on four major qualities that make it distinctive. Boston is widely recognized to be:

- A city of neighborhoods.
- A vital natural environment.
- A cultural and learning center.
- The hub of transportation and employment for New England.

To pursue these goals, Boston needs to provide a quality physical infrastructure, an excellent public education for school-age residents, and housing for people of all income levels. Boston 400's role is to focus on the physical city — streets and sidewalks, parks and open spaces, residential areas, transit, schools and public buildings, Downtown and neighborhood business districts, museums and other cultural attractions, environmental quality, and the physical components of our housing and school systems.

Boston 400 coordinated an extensive process of public engagement to define the goals and strategies to guide the City to its 400th anniversary in 2030. The centerpiece of the process was a series of more than 150

community meetings at neighborhoods throughout the city, which involved more than 1,000 people.

Once the first phase of community meetings was completed in June of 1998, Boston 400 created several working committees to synthesize the material gathered in the neighborhoods and gather additional information from community leaders and professionals.

Five of the committees explored planning opportunities for the critical spaces and systems of the city: Parks and Natural Spaces, Transportation Connections, Housing Opportunities, Downtown Center of Activity, and Cultural and Historic Resources.

Three other committees — Streetscape and Urban Design, Employment and Economic Development, and Spaces for Families and Children — are developing guidelines to be used for future development in Boston.

From now until the spring, the BRA will solicit ideas about which projects should get top priority. Those ideas will be incorporated into later planning documents including Boston 400's initial report to the city.

The report planned for next year — tentatively titled *Connecting the City and Its People: A Boston 400 Report on Planning Options for the Next Generation* — will be the subject of several spring forums where Bostonians can again contribute to the process.

Residents, Businesses Call for Better Links To Resources of City

Boston 400, the City's comprehensive planning initiative, has developed planning priorities designed to create seamless connections between neighborhoods and natural, cultural, and educational opportunities.

These priorities, which emerged from more than 150 community meetings across the city, will guide planning and development as the City nears its 400th anniversary in 2030. At the direction of mayor Thomas M. Menino, the Boston Redevelopment Authority is coordinating Boston 400 among City agencies.

To realize the vision of "the city as a natural environment," Boston 400 has called for greater access to the Boston Harbor and Harbor Islands, completion of the restoration of the Emerald Necklace, enhanced systems of neighborhood parks, and initiatives to achieve environmental justice.

Well-defined and connected natural resources create the foundation for other efforts, such as initiatives to connect community facilities to common civic spaces, special programs to link families and children to cultural and educational opportunities, and new efforts to improve school buildings and other public facilities throughout the city.

Multi-modal transportation and strong standards of streetscape and urban design will support all of these efforts. Boston 400 will call for expanded public transit options, enhanced pedestrian spaces, and a seamless bicycle network.

Throughout the community planning process, which began in September 1997, residents urged Boston 400 to devise strategies to take better advantage of existing assets. Those assets include Boston Harbor and the city's five rivers, a world-class park system, a diverse economy, and vast cultural and historic resources.

People who attended community meetings urged Boston 400 to undertake a number of initiatives:

Citywide Parks and Natural Spaces. One of the top goals for Boston 400 is to develop complete access for all people to Boston Harbor and to the new Boston Harbor Islands National Park. Residents have called for the deployment of special transit loops to provide access to the Harbor for neighborhoods traditionally under-served by public transportation like Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan.

Other citywide parks and natural spaces — such as Franklin Park, the Neponset River Greenway, and Charles River Reservation — also need creative transportation and planning efforts to be connected to Boston's neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Parks and Natural Spaces. Boston 400 also will recommend a major effort to create "emerald bracelets" — seamless systems that link neighborhood parks with other community resources, such as schools, libraries, community centers, historic and cultural resources, and business districts.

Most neighborhoods already have important parks within walking distance of residents. The "emerald bracelets" will help to extend the ease of access to larger stretches of the neighborhood through such design elements as signage, landscaping, and stairs and other pathways. In addition to these improvements, the City will consider which communities require acquisition of new park spaces. Through these initiatives, the City will help communities express their unique identities.

Transportation Connections. Ease of access to the city's many resources is critical for people in every
(Continued on page 4)

Here is what we've heard so far . . .

Since last year, residents of Boston's neighborhoods have gathered in public meetings to express their visions to guide the City to its 400th anniversary in 2030. These two pages offer a sampling of those suggestions. We invite residents and merchants to keep the conversation going. Take a few minutes to look over these ideas, and tell us what you think. Join your neighbors and be a part of planning the City for its next generation.

Harbortrail

The South Bay Harbortrail initiative proposes a new pedestrian and bicycle trail linking Roxbury and the South End to Boston Harbor and the Harbor Islands via the Southwest Corridor Park, Melnea Cass Boulevard Bikeway, the BioSquarc project, the Central Artery surface park, Fort Point Channel, the Children's and Computer Museums, and the Seaport.

24-hour downtown

Boston has always thrived when it has fostered mixed-use districts throughout the City. No less than outlying neighborhoods, Downtown and its nearby neighborhoods need to be home to a wide range of residential opportunities, businesses, and cultural and historic opportunities. A critical element of mixed-use development is expanded and more efficient transit.

South End EDA

The South End Economic Development Area is a prime location with proximity to the area's major regional highways. The South End/Lower Roxbury Development Policy Plan recommends new zoning to allow a broad spectrum of commercial development. Support the plan and development projects in the area that reinforce the scale and assets of the neighborhood.

Middle-income housing

Back Bay and the South End have seen extreme rises in housing costs for middle-income residents, with student populations putting severe pressure on housing markets. Enact zoning that preserves affordable units. Work with institutions to address the pressure of student housing. Pursue new efforts to develop mixed-use communities and increase the housing stock.

Washington Street

Boston's "Main Street for the 21st Century" has always been the spine of the city, from the days when it was the only connection from the Shawmut Peninsula to the mainland. Washington Street now offers tremendous opportunities for business and residential development. Focus on pedestrian oriented design, preservation of historic buildings, and housing development. Develop Washington Street outward as a series of communities that relate to the City's historic core. Relate the Street's planning to other critical Downtown corridors.

Massachusetts Turnpike air rights

Planning process recently began to set standards for the air rights above the Massachusetts Turnpike. Articulate development standards to emphasize the scale and historic styles of the neighborhoods. In private developments, insist on mixed-use development for the air rights parcels. Build a park over the highway to afford Chinatown residents much-needed "breathing room." Since more Chinese families are living south of Kneeland Street, a park over the turnpike would offer an important connection to central Chinatown.

Seaport District

The Seaport District's new convention center and comprehensive plan offer potential for dynamic office, hotel, residential, and cultural development. Guarantee waterfront access and views. Strengthen Boston's waterfront activity. Surround the convention center with buffers to protect residential areas. Create new housing opportunities. Create incentives for a diverse array of businesses including a working port and maritime and industrial activities. Establish efficient, designated routes for truck traffic.

Boylston Street

Boylston Street is incoherent. Architectural styles are haphazard and incompatible, and pavements are patchy. Gaps in streetscape discourage pedestrian traffic, street trees are in decline, and auto traffic is dangerous. Foster diversity through zoning that allows different activities on different floors. Consider filling Hynes arcade with small shops; discuss plans for open space and garage-ramp area with Prudential. Ban additional commercial parking spaces. Initiate design process to replace new library's fortress walls.



Infrastructure

Many critical underground utilities were built 75 to 100 years ago and now pose serious problems to the structural integrity of buildings and the functionality of the utilities. Develop a management plan for all underground utilities. Include maintenance and replacement schedules and coordination guidelines for various entities that do street and/or excavation work.

MBTA Silver Line

This new line will provide rapid transit service along Washington Street. The Washington Street Task Force recommended pedestrian-oriented design, on-street parking, links from Downtown Crossing that extend south of Dudley Square to Mattapan Square. Emphasize clustering and design of developments near transit nodes.

Central Artery

The depression of the Central Artery presents unique opportunities to strengthen the connections and orientation of the Downtown and surrounding communities. Re-establish historic streets, develop mixed-use urban villages, and create parks and other civic spaces that can attract pedestrian activity and develop creative maintenance programs.

Parking

The area's parking crunch threatens the character of its neighborhoods. Develop design incentives to reduce parking. Increase T ridership through marketing and promotions. Lobby the MBTA to extend hours. Increase the cash fleet. Initiate a car-sharing program, in which people could rent cars for occasional use similar to time-sharing arrangements.

Seaport-to-Back Bay connection

Meet the transportation challenges posed by the development of the Seaport District. Use this development to reduce reliance on automobile travel. Develop transit connections between the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center and Back Bay, with links to the Red, Orange, and Silver Lines. Keep parking and traffic off neighborhood streets. Limit the number of parking spaces in the core area to strengthen the incentive to use mass transit. Provide attractive and detailed information and directions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

Cambridge Street

Cambridge Street is a critical border for Beacon Hill, the West End, Government Center, and the City of Cambridge. This boulevard feeds dangerous and disruptive traffic into Beacon Hill. Traffic undermines pedestrian crossings from the south to the north sides of the street. The Cambridge Street Boulevard Redesign (nearing completion) should alleviate crossing problems. State funding is needed for reconstruction. The redesign of the Red line station at Charles/MGH could provide a critical node for redesign and reorientation of the whole corridor.

Historic Chinatown

Boston's Chinatown is a historic and diverse community that constantly struggles to maintain its authenticity in the face of traffic and development pressures. Establish economic policies favorable to small business owners to foster economic diversity. Ensure that streetscape design reinforces bustling, 24-hour activity. Install street furniture and place a public restroom at the Phillips Square area on Harrison Avenue. Establish a permanent trail, such as a brick path in the sidewalk, that leads residents and visitors through the history and culture of Chinatown.

Massachusetts Avenue

The traffic congestion and pedestrian hazards on Massachusetts Avenue are arguably the worst in the City. Street trees are in decline and sidewalks are in disrepair. Promote a residential presence on upper-level floors of buildings to enhance the mixed-use character of the street. Promote traffic-calming measures, improve traffic light timing for longer walk cycles, redesign the Massachusetts Avenue bus stop, and encourage upgrades of retail sections (especially between Commonwealth Avenue and Beacon Street). Improve the visibility of landmark buildings and sites.

Esplanade

The Back Bay's Esplanade, Boston Common, and Beacon Street and Commonwealth Avenue bear the brunt of hosting many of Boston's large public events. It is important to distribute some of these events to under-utilized sections of the City to benefit other neighborhoods and to relieve pressure on the Back Bay and Beacon Hill. Find alternate locations for large, public gatherings. Make City Hall Plaza as event-friendly as the Esplanade and maintain open space on the Plaza. Make large events "free T" events and provide transit service late into the night.

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Chinatown's shops and restaurants

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Thank you for your input.



Brownstone facades define the elegant Commonwealth Avenue Mall.

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BOSTON 400 UPDATE

Boston 400: The City's Comprehensive Planning Initiative

March 1998

A Better Environment for Social Needs Is Boston 400 Priority

Creating better connections between social activities and Boston's physical environment has emerged as a major issue for Boston 400 at community meetings throughout the city.

Boston 400 is primarily a physical planning process, but its overall goal is not just to enhance the appearance of the places where Boston's people come together. The goal is to help businesses, educators, social service providers, and families develop new common ground.

The makeup of neighborhoods in Boston and other cities is much more complex than a generation ago. Ethnically and racially, the neighborhoods comprise more groups and sub-groups. The changing composition of the family has changed the kinds of support structures that households need, such as education, child care, elder care, medical care, and recreation.

Better transportation connections is one important strategy for addressing people's social needs throughout the city. But other kinds of connections — such as clustering and design of streets, parks, schools, community centers, libraries, and other structures — also are important.

Many neighborhoods have already begun discussing how social services can be related to each other through the physical planning process.

In Roxbury, for example, residents have underscored the importance of developing a mix of housing types for all income groups. Residents stressed the importance of home ownership for developing the kinds of social networks that enliven the neighborhood.

In Fenway/Kenmore/Audubon Circle, residents have called for a greater presence of elderly housing. The neighborhood's close proximity to the Longwood Medical Area would allow seniors greater convenience and also draw the seniors' families back into the City.

In Dorchester and Mattapan, residents are looking forward to the implementation of the Metropolitan District Commission's Neponset River Master Plan, which will provide a wide range of recreational and educational opportunities. But residents stressed that access to the river must be enhanced for all to enjoy those opportunities.

People in community meetings also have stressed the importance of creating a cluster of educational and recreational opportunities. Families should have ready access

to schools, sports and other recreational programs, health care, and other services. If the City clusters some of these services, schools will receive more of the support they need.

Boston 400 will engage a number of other City agencies to get their input on physical needs and will work with other City initiatives, such as the Avenue of the Arts and the Boston 2000 initiatives announced by Mayor Thomas M. Menino in January.

Boston's Neighborhoods Explore Strategies for Better Connections

Across the city members of Boston's communities have been meeting on a regular basis to develop visions and agendas to guide them to Boston's 400th birthday in the year 2030.

In neighborhoods from Back Bay to Mattapan and Fenway to West Roxbury, residents and merchants have expressed broad agreement on a wide range of issues. Neighborhoods want to enhance connections to parks and open spaces, the waterfront, cultural assets, education, and social services. But at the same time, they face different challenges in realizing their goals.

Boston 400 Update provides a monthly review of the neighborhood planning processes. Last month, the early efforts of Jamaica Plain and Mattapan were highlighted. This month, the focus is on Mission Hill and Fenway/Kenmore/Audubon Circle.

Mission Hill: Located near Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, Fenway, and the Longwood Medical Area, Mission Hill boasts numerous assets. Close to downtown, the Jamaica Way, the Southwest Corridor, and several T stops, Mission Hill also enjoys priceless architecture, hilltop views of the area, and a diverse population.

But residents say that Mission Hill needs to develop a comprehensive strategy for connecting these assets so that they reinforce each other.

One of the most promising connections is the Ledge Site near Brigham Circle. A community-based planning process produced a plan for mixed-use development linked with park space that would connect the Longwood Medical Area with the neighborhood. The development could offer critical retail space to both Mission Hill and

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March 1998 Calendar

4 Wednesday

Roslindale - "Enhancing Major Corridors in Roslindale," Roslindale Community Center, 6 Cummins Highway, 7:00 p.m.

5 Thursday

North End - "Retaining and Enhancing the Distinctive Character of the North End / Waterfront: Should the North End Become a Historic District?" Nazzaro Community Center, 30 North Bennett Street, 7:00 p.m.

West Roxbury - "Building Stronger Business Districts in West Roxbury," Roche Family Community Center, 1716 Centre Street, 7:00 p.m.

7 Saturday

Related to Boston 400 - Town Meeting sponsored by the National Recreation and Park Association on the subject "Parks for the 21st Century: Will There Be Funding?" Marriott Coppley Hotel, 9:00 a.m. For more information, call the Boston Parks and Recreation Department at 617-635-4989.

10 Tuesday

Roxbury - "Developing an Agenda for Roxbury Planning," Roxbury Community College (Room 300), 1350 Tremont Street, 7:00 p.m.

Related to Boston 400 - Meeting of the Dorchester Allied Neighborhood Association to discuss Boston 400's role in Dorchester Planning and Development, Susse Chalet, 900 Morrissey Boulevard, 7:00 p.m.

11 Wednesday

Boston 400 Task Force - Monthly meeting open to the public, Boston City Hall (Room 900), 8:00 a.m.

Allston / Brighton - "Managing Density in Allston and Brighton," Jackson Mann Community Center (Theater), 500 Cambridge Street, 7:00 p.m.

Charlestown - "Enhancing Boulevards and Main Streets in Charlestown," Knights of Columbus (Lower Hall), 75 West School Street, 7:00 p.m.

Mission Hill - "Design and Stewardship of Parks in Mission Hill," with the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, Massachusetts College of Art (Trustee Room), 621 Huntington Avenue, 7:00 p.m.

12 Thursday

Beacon Hill / West End - "Promoting the Walking City," Boston City Hall (Room 933A), 6:00 p.m.

Planning the Future of Boston

As part of Boston 400, every community is invited to participate in a series of "focus meetings" to address topics important to the long-term future of Boston. These meetings will take place throughout the spring. Each meeting is open to people from all neighborhoods.

12 Thursday (cont.)

Hyde Park - "Making Connections Between Parks and Natural Spaces," Hyde Park Community Center, 1179 River Street, 7:00 p.m.

South End - "Review of the South End/Lower Roxbury Development Policy Plan: A Vision for the South End and Lower Roxbury," Hamlet Tubman House, 566 Columbus Avenue, 6:30 p.m.

Related to Boston 400 - "Rebuilding Community," a slide presentation on urban revitalization by Carter Wilkie, author of *Changing Places* Boston Public Library, 666 Boylston Street, 6:00 p.m.

14 Saturday

Dorchester - "A Dorchester Open House: A Comprehensive Overview of Community-Building Efforts," slide presentations and information packets to be presented. Choice of two times and locations: The Great Hall at Codman Square Health Center, 6 Norfolk Street, 10:00-11:00 a.m. OR Carney Hospital (Auditorium), 2100 Dorchester Avenue, 1:00-2:00 p.m.

15 Sunday

Related to Boston 400 - Deadline for submission of proposals to Boston 2000 (formerly Boston 2000 Millennium Commission) for legacy projects. For more information, call Boston 2000 617-635-3342, ext. 460.

18 Wednesday

Jamaica Plain - "Traffic Calming on the Arborway," a community meeting with the Arborway Coalition and Metropolitan District Commission, St. Thomas Aquinas Church (Lower Hall), 97 South Street, 7:30 p.m.

Roslindale - "Making Connections between Roslindale and Nearby Neighborhoods," Roslindale Community Center, 6 Cummins Highway, 7:00 p.m.

19 Thursday

Chinatown / Leather District - "Creating Opportunities for Open Space in Chinatown and the Leather District," Asian Community Development Corporation Office, 888 Washington Street, 6:00 p.m.

21 Saturday

Mattapan - "Strategies for Developing Parks and Open Spaces in Mattapan," with the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, Mattapan Family Service Center, 535 River Street, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

Related to Boston 400 - "Gardeners Gathering: Building Community in Community Gardens," an afternoon of workshops sponsored by Garden Futures at Roxbury Community College (Media Arts Building) 1243 Columbus Avenue, 12:00 - 5:00 p.m. For more information, translation or rides call 617-522-1996

24 Tuesday

Related to Boston 400 - Meeting with MBTA to discuss Green Line's E train service and repairs, 100 South Huntington Avenue, 7:00 p.m.

25 Wednesday

Allston / Brighton - "Improving Park Design, Use and Accessibility in Allston and Brighton," with the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, Jackson Mann Community Center (Theater), 500 Cambridge Street, 7:00 p.m.

East Boston - "Enhancing Major Corridors in East Boston," Harborside Community Center, 312 Border Street, 7:00 p.m.

26 Thursday

Back Bay - "Addressing Transportation and Traffic Issues," Boston Public Library (Conference Room 5), 666 Boylston Street, 7:00 p.m.

Hyde Park - "Connecting Cultural and Historic Resources in Hyde Park," Hyde Park Community Center, 1179 River Street, 7:00 p.m.

28 Saturday

Fenway / Kenmore / Audubon Circle - "Strengthening Physical Connections Between Fenway, Kenmore, and Audubon Circle," special planning workshop, Morville House, 100 Norway Street, 2:00-5:00 p.m.

31 Tuesday

North End / Waterfront - "Parks and Open Spaces in the North End / Waterfront: Improving Public Access to the Waterfront," with the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, Nazzaro Community Center, 30 North Bennett Street, 7:00 p.m.

Neighborhoods Begin Workshops to Tie Boston 400 Pieces Together

After months of evening meetings to discuss a wide range of neighborhood planning issues, Boston 400 has initiated a series of Saturday morning workshops.

The workshops are designed to create a more dynamic process that will allow people in the neighborhoods to discuss how different elements of neighborhood space relate to each other.

"The neighborhood meetings on weekday evenings have been a great way to get an inventory of existing conditions, and to explore some possible options for the issues that come up," said Linda M. Haar, Director of Planning for the Boston Redevelopment Authority. "But we need to have some more extensive conversations, too."

"We think the workshops will give us the time we need to really work through some of the connections issues. How do parks connect to transportation? How do business

districts connect to residential areas. We need a way to see how the pieces fit together."

The first Saturday workshop took place on February 14 in Mattapan. Residents discussed how Blue Hill Avenue could pull together business, residential, recreational, institutional, and educational spaces. Residents and merchants watched a slide presentation and discussed the area's history and current problems — and specific strategies that might be used to address those problems.

In March, workshops are scheduled for Dorchester and Fenway/Kenmore/Audubon Circle. Mattapan also will continue its Saturday discussions.

This spring, Boston 400 will convene workshops to discuss issues that overlap neighborhoods. A discussion of the Southwest Corridor, for example, would include Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, and the South End.

Neighborhoods Seek Ways to Create Better Connections

continued from page 1

Longwood as well as office space and a concealed parking garage.

Tremont Street and Heath Street are other important connections. Both of these streets are located near T stops and could create the "glue" necessary to foster stronger identity. Residents expressed the desire for Heath Street to become a more vibrant residential corridor, while Tremont would be a dynamic mixed-use corridor linked to the Ledge site and Green and Orange line T stops.

One of the most important challenges, residents say, is developing linkages between the parks and playgrounds in the area. McLaughlin Park, for example, is now disconnected from the flow of neighborhood circulation. Community gardens, the Hennigan School playground, the park planned at the Ledge site, urban wilds, Heath Square, and the Riverway are all important links in a prospective chain of parks and civic spaces.

Transportation is another critical element in Mission Hill's future. Because of its proximity to the Longwood Medical Area, Mission Hill faces challenges controlling traffic and parking. Residents discussed ways to strengthen public transit to encourage Longwood workers to get to the area without cars.

Fenway/Kenmore/Audubon Circle: Fostering connections between the three distinct sections of this diverse neighborhood has emerged as the major goal of residents and merchants. Those connections depend on improvements in public transit, traffic patterns, parks and open spaces, and nearby institutions.

The major concern expressed was that the neighborhood has become a major pass through for commuters to both downtown and the Longwood Medical Area — especially along Boylston Street from the Victory Gardens to the Landmark Center. Residents and merchants sug-

gested a number of specific strategies to improve public transit service, enhance "walk to work" and housing programs for people employed at Longwood, and better distribution of traffic to and from Storrow Drive and the Jamaica-
away

At a meeting with representatives of the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, Fenway/Kenmore/Audubon Circle residents also made several suggestions to improve access to the parks. Better paths and lighting at strategic points are essential to that task. One of the more ambitious proposals was the depression of the Bowker Overpass, which cuts off access to the Charles River and parts of the Muddy River.

Other discussions about connections focused on the Beacon Street corridor from Kenmore Square to Audubon Circle, the Brookline Street bridge between Kenmore Square and Boylston Street, and the gateway area at Westland Avenue and Hemenway Street.

National Conference, Workshops Kick Off 5-Year Parks' Planning

A national conference to celebrate the first century of the National Recreation and Park Association will be the forum for the official beginning of the Boston Parks and Recreation Department's process for developing an five-year plan.

The association will meet at the Marriott Copley Hotel on March 5-8. At 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 7, the Association will hold a National Town Meeting on "Parks for the 21st Century: Will There Be Funding?"

Bostonians are invited to contribute ideas for improving parks in Boston over the next five years. For more information about the conference, call 617-635-4989.



Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, Massachusetts 02201



~~Mr. Robert Curney~~
City of Boston
Boston Public Library
666 Boylston Street
Boston MA 02116

Gov. Doc.

Quote, Unquote

"It's time for the Avenue to play its rightful role in the life of Boston – as the Avenue of the Arts. The new name proclaims that Huntington Avenue is central to Boston's cultural life – and to the life of the city in general. We're going to make the Avenue of the Arts a grand boulevard with new sidewalks, trees, streetlights, and MBTA kiosks. As we expand education beyond the confines of the classroom, we should remember that Boston's 22 great museums and cultural sites are classrooms of a different – and special – sort. They offer unique tools for education – first-hand encounters with history and art. We need to take these institutions and put them to work for kids, and for ourselves. Whether it's Mass Art students helping kids paint a mural on a neighborhood schoolyard or an afternoon concert at the Gardner Museum, the arts connect us to one another, and show us the world."

Mayor Thomas M. Menino, announcing the City's initiative to redesign Huntington Avenue and rename it the Avenue of the Arts, at the Museum of Fine Arts, on January 4, 1998.

Contact Us

Please contact us if you have any questions or comments about the Boston 400 process or the *Boston 400 Update*.

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Boston 400: The City's Comprehensive Planning Initiative

APR 30 1998

May/June 1998

Boston 400 Summarizes Citywide Priorities, Prepares Fall Update

Neighborhoods To Respond To Summaries, Participate in Citywide Conference in Fall

As neighborhoods throughout the City complete a series of meetings that began last fall, Boston 400 will circulate summaries of its planning priorities this summer for comment. In early fall, Boston 400 will issue a citywide update and hold a citywide conference to stimulate further discussion of the issues raised in the planning process.

Since last September, Boston 400 has held close to 150 community meetings involving more than 1,000 people. At those meetings, residents, merchants, and others have outlined their concerns with the physical makeup of their communities.

The next step is to report back to those communities with summaries of the priorities they expressed, a citywide update articulating goals; and proposed strategies to meet those goals and objectives.

"The whole point of these conversations has been to find out how the pieces of our communities might fit together to serve our residents better," said Linda Haar, Director of Planning. "We have heard a lot of creative ideas on everything from parks to streetscape design to traffic to spaces for families and children.

"Now we need to summarize these ideas and get people's reactions, as we move on to defining strategies for the plan."

The neighborhood summaries, which will be released in June or July, will take two forms. One summary will list all of the major projects or studies underway that deal with the physical makeup of the neighborhood. The other summary will list the concerns and ideas that residents articulated in community meetings.

These summaries will be available from the BRA, in libraries and community centers, and on Boston 400's Internet site. In addition to these point-by-point summaries, Boston 400 will also distribute reports to the neighborhoods in the form of newspaper tabloids.

Boston 400 planners will incorporate the community responses into the development of a citywide Boston 400

update that will be released in October. That document will provide a baseline definition of where the city is today and synthesize all of the work of Boston 400 to date — the neighborhood processes, Task Force deliberations, and policy and planning initiatives.

In November, Boston 400 will invite the neighborhoods to come together to explore their mutual concerns and ideas. This Conference of Neighborhoods was inspired by an initial gathering last summer of leaders of neighborhood organizations from around the City and by participants in the Boston 400 discussions who had expressly recognized that the fortunes of all communities are related to each other — from development to housing to transportation to parks.

A true citywide plan requires attention to the details of the neighborhoods, but also the broad themes of the City as a whole.

Before the report-and-review process begins, there is still much work to be done in the neighborhoods. In May and June, a wide range of topics are scheduled for discussion.

Many neighborhoods will join together to explore common concerns. Communities along the Neponset River and the Southwest Corridor, for example, will meet this month to explore those open space and natural systems.

Looking Ahead ...

A thumbnail overview of Boston 400's summer and fall process:

June and July 1998:

Boston 400 distributes summaries of community conversations and seeks comments and additions.

October 1998: Citywide Boston 400 Update issued by BRA.

November 1998: Citywide Conference of Neighborhoods.



May 1998 Calendar

2 Saturday

Dorchester - "The Greening of Dorchester," a special planning workshop co-sponsored by Dorchester Greenlands, Dorchester Charette, Boston Parks and Recreation Department, Bayside Office Center, 150 Mt. Vernon Street, 8:45 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

4 Monday

Jamaica Plain - "Putting It All Together: Mapping an Approach to Planning in Jamaica Plain," Curtis Hall Community Center, 20 South Street, 7:00 p.m.

5 Tuesday

Fenway / Kenmore / Audubon Circle - "Putting It All Together: Mapping an Approach to Planning in Fenway/ Kenmore/ Audubon Circle," Berkeley College of Music (Room 2-E), 1140 Boylston Street, 7:00 p.m.

6 Wednesday

Beacon Hill / West End - "Summary of Neighborhood Issues to Date" Boston City Hall (Room 900), 6:00 p.m.

Related to Boston 400 - "The New Urbanism Paradigm Shift or Palliative?" a lecture by Matthew Kiefer at the Arnold Arboretum, 7:00 p.m. Advanced registration is required. Please call 617-524-1718 x 162.

12 Tuesday

Roxbury - "Developing an Agenda for Roxbury Planning, Part II," Boston Police Headquarters (Room 2 North), 1199 Tremont Street, 5:30 p.m.

Special Planning Workshop - "Building Community Around Green Space: the Massachusetts Audubon Project and Beyond." Residents of Mattapan, Dorchester and other communities are invited to attend. Haley Elementary School, 578 Amencan Legion Highway, 6:30 p.m.

13 Wednesday

Mission Hill - "Putting It All Together," Massachusetts College of Art (Trustee Room), 621 Huntington Avenue, 7:00 p.m.

Roslindale - "Roslindale Square: The Center of the Community." Walking tour and workshop. Tour will leave from the park in front of the Melting Pot Coffee House, 6:15 p.m. For the workshop only, meet at the Roslindale Community Center, 6 Cummins Highway (Washington Street entrance), 7:30 p.m.

South End / Bay Village - "Review Draft Summary of Comments to the Boston 400 Task Force," Franklin House Library, 11 East Newton Street, 6:30 p.m.

16 Saturday

Allston / Brighton - "Van Tour of Planning Challenges in Allston / Brighton." Leaving from the Jackson Mann Community Center, 500 Cambridge Street, 9:00 a.m. Limited seating on a first come, first served basis. Please call Lance Campbell at 617-722-4300 x 4311 to reserve a space.

19 Tuesday

Boston 400 Task Force - Monthly meeting open to the public, Boston City Hall (Room 900), 8:00 a.m.

20 Wednesday

Allston / Brighton - "Putting It All Together: Mapping an Approach to Planning in Allston / Brighton," Jackson Mann Community Center, 500 Cambridge Street, 7:00 p.m.

Special Planning Workshop - "Toward a New Neponset Community: Building on the Lower Neponset River Reservation Master Plan." A special planning workshop for Dorchester, Hyde Park, Mattapan, and other interested communities. At the Boston Public Health Commission (formerly the Boston Specialty and Rehabilitation Hospital), Foley Building (Cafeteria), 249 River Street, Mattapan, 6:30 p.m.

20 Wednesday (cont'd)

North End / Waterfront - "Accommodating Visitors and Tourists: Providing Facilities and Managing Impacts," Nazzaro Community Center, 30 North Bennet Street, 6:30 p.m.

21 Thursday

Chinatown / Leather District - "Review of Planning Challenges in Chinatown," Asian Community Development Corporation Office, 888 Washington Street, 6:00 p.m.

22 Friday

Related to Boston 400 - Boston Bike Festival at City Hall Plaza 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. This carnival-style event will feature entertainment and exhibitors. It marks the end of Boston Bike Week 1998, a week-long celebration that begins May 17.

26 Tuesday

Roxbury - "Developing an Agenda for Roxbury Planning, Part III," Boston Police Headquarters, 1199 Tremont Street (Media Room), 5:30 p.m.

27 Wednesday

Back Bay - "Review of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay Draft Strategic Plan and Review Draft Summary of Comments to the Boston 400 Task Force," Boston Public Library (Conference Room 5), 666 Boylston Street, 7:00 p.m.

Charlestown - "Envisioning the Charlestown Business Community in 2030," co-sponsored by the Charlestown Business Association. Call Carol Bratley for time and location at 617-241-9400.

June 1998 Calendar

2 Tuesday

Special Planning Workshop - "Best of Both Worlds: Balancing Suburban and Urban Qualities." A workshop for Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, Roslindale, West Roxbury and other communities interested in making the most of both the urban and suburban qualities of Boston's "Streetcar Suburbs." Roslindale House Auditorium, 110 Poplar Street, Roslindale, 6:30 p.m.

5 Friday / 6 Saturday

Related to Boston 400 - Mattapan Gateway Festival, Mattapan Square. Festival features local vendors, a health fair, and the final selection for the Brown Fund public art project.

10 Wednesday

Roslindale - "Putting It All Together: Mapping an Approach to Planning in Roslindale," Roslindale Community Center, 6 Cummins Highway (Washington Street entrance), 7:00 p.m.

11 Thursday

Hyde Park - "Putting It All Together: Mapping an Approach to Planning in Hyde Park," Hyde Park Community Center, 1179 River Street, 7:00 p.m.

13 Saturday

Mattapan - "Putting It All Together: Mapping an Approach to Planning in Mattapan," Area B-3 Police Station, 1165 Blue Hill Avenue, 8:00 a.m.

23 Tuesday

North End - "Summary of Neighborhood Issues to Date," Nazzaro Community Center, 30 North Bennet Street, 7:00 p.m.

24 Wednesday

Charlestown - "Summary of Neighborhood Issues to Date" Knights of Columbus (Lower Hall), 75 W. School Street, 7:00 p.m.

Also in June . . .

Communities along the Southwest Corridor will meet to talk about development, enhancement of park spaces, traffic, and related issues.

Planning Processes for Roxbury and East Boston Move Into High Gear

As Boston 400's community-based planning moves toward a process of review, two neighborhoods have begun efforts to develop comprehensive plans.

The BRA and the East Boston Coordinated Planning Initiative (CPI) selected Icon Associates to work together to develop with a comprehensive plan and implementation strategy for East Boston. Icon will work with other planning professionals, including the consultants Howard/Stein-Hudson and Byrne, McKinney and Associates, to develop its strategy.

At the same time, the BRA is working with the Roxbury Neighborhood Council to develop a master plan for Roxbury. Consultant services also will be provided to assist in this effort.

Both planning processes are open to all interested members of the community. The BRA's Director of Planning, Linda Haar, stressed the importance of broad participation to move from the planning to implementation stage.

At Boston 400 meetings in both neighborhoods, residents and merchants urged production of middle-income housing, creative approaches to enhancement of mixed-use districts, better integration of natural resources with the life of the community, and improved streetscapes that would strengthen economic and social life.

Mixed-use development is especially important, since it fosters a diverse economic base and also encourages strong neighborhood identity.

Residents in East Boston have developed a planning agenda in recent years and say they are anxious to

develop a strategic approach to achieving their vision.

East Boston residents expressed an urgent desire to bring economic vitality to the waterfront and to connect their neighborhood to the harbor.

Community leaders in East Boston in April gave a tour to BRA Director Thomas N. O'Brien and City Councilor Paul Scapicchio to describe their vision for waterfront development. All sides said the tour was helpful demonstrating East Boston's concerns.

Roxbury residents and merchants called for a comprehensive strategy for development of vacant parcels. Without such a strategy, they argued, Roxbury would struggle to develop the kind of continuous, tightly woven business and residential environment that is vital to development.

The Roxbury initiative will build on a number of existing initiatives, such as the Roxbury Neighborhood District Zoning, Enhanced Enterprise Community, the Dudley Square Neighborhood Initiative, Main Streets, and Urban Edge's Jackson-Egleston strategy.

A preliminary scope for the plan has been outlined. An early planning priority is to encourage economic activity in the Melnea Cass corridor. This focus will build on the City's past initiatives for economic development in the neighborhood.

Both East Boston and Roxbury residents have stressed their proximity, respectively, to the harbor and to downtown Boston, as major assets to build upon in their planning and development processes. They have also stressed their strong natural resources, diverse populations, and seasoned community leadership as assets.

Communities Asked to Contribute To Boston 400 Vision Summaries

As Boston 400 prepares summaries of points made in community meetings since last fall, community groups and citizens are invited to contribute their ideas for inclusion in the summaries.

Some people have been unable to attend some neighborhood meetings. But they still should be able to articulate issues and concerns that they would like to see considered in Boston 400 deliberations.

Residents, merchants, and others are asked to call or to write the BRA with their concerns. The topics covered in the neighborhood summaries include Business and Activity Centers, Transportation, Parks and Civic Spaces, Spaces for Families and Children, Housing and Residential Development, and Other.

Please indicate the sites involved, the issues and opportunities, possible responses, and the neighborhood and city context.

Boston 400 will provide worksheets for this process. Information can be conveyed by letter, e-mail, phone, and fax. For information on how to reach us, see page 4 of *Boston 400 Update*.

Dorchester Gathers To Plan 'Green' Development Strategy

Dorchester advocates for "green" and "blue" spaces will seek to develop a community-wide conversation to improve parks, waterfronts, and other open spaces when they gather at the Bay Side Office Center on May 2.

The conference — sponsored by Dorchester Gardenlands, the BRA's Boston 400 and rezoning efforts, the Parks and Recreation Department, and the Dorchester Charrette — will meet from 8:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The keynote speaker will be Sam Bass Warner, author of *Streetcar Suburbs*, a classic study of how transportation networks fostered 19th-century development in Boston.

After Warner's opening remarks, conferees will express their priorities and concerns at a "gallery planning session." People will circulate among several tables to discuss issues regarding parks, playgrounds, urban wilds, and the Boston Harbor and Neponset River waterfronts.

For more information, call Dorchester Gardenlands at (617) 825-9126.



Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, Massachusetts 02201

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Government Documents
Boston Public Library
700 Boylston Street
Boston MA 02116

Quote, Unquote

"People normally think of public benefits as simply linkage dollars, but these three areas of open space, a variety of uses and quality of design are just as important a part of a public benefits package. In fact, citizens from the rest of the City of Boston will be more affected by these areas than by the millions of linkage dollars that will come from development. . . . We must remember that the character of a city is defined by its people, not its buildings. Only by making this area lively and inviting to the people of Boston; only by creating a variety of uses that draw all kinds of people down to and onto the water; and only by working to create the best designed and most aesthetically pleasing waterfront neighborhood will we have made the most of this incredible natural resource and fulfilled our obligation to the generations to come."

Excerpt from a speech delivered on Friday, April 13, 1998, by Thomas N. O'Brien, Director, Boston Redevelopment Authority, at the Boston Harbor Conference, an event co-sponsored by Fleet Bank, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Boston Globe.

Contact Us

Please contact us if you have any questions or comments about the Boston 400 process or the *Boston 400 Update*.

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Boston 400 UPDATE

Boston 400: The City's Comprehensive Planning Initiative

FEB 24 1998

February 1998

Task Force Develops Analyses For Neighborhood Priorities

To build on the early work of the neighborhood planning process, Boston 400 has begun to charge its Task Force members with developing analyses and options on a wide range of issues.

Members of Boston's 18 neighborhoods have met several times to develop an inventory of existing conditions. During Phase 1 of the process, Boston 400 solicited general comments on the major issues in the neighborhoods. During Phase 2, which is still under way, the neighborhoods are focusing on specific topics.

A number of common themes emerged in the neighborhood meetings. Those themes are being passed on to the members of the Boston 400 Task Force, which is comprised of leading architects, planners, economic development specialists, environmental and open space advocates, institutional leaders, and community leaders.

"The idea behind these initiatives is to find out what needs attention and then get people who know about the issue to help us develop solutions to the problems," said Linda M. Haar, Director of Planning and Zoning for the Boston Redevelopment Authority. "We have some incredible talent in the Boston community, and we need to focus it on the issues that are raised by neighborhood residents."

The following are some of the questions that have been assigned to Task Force members for analyses and development of planning and policy options:

- How can the City make its parks, open spaces, and neighborhoods function more efficiently as an environmental system? What strategies can be used to fix the "broken pieces" – and build upon the existing inventory – of the Emerald Necklace? How can access to parks and open spaces be enhanced?
- How can the City accommodate some large-scale retailing, while at the same time preserving the "fine-grained" character of Boston's fabric?
- What are the implications of information technology for physical planning efforts like Boston 400? How does technology change the context for life in business, education, and the home? To what extent does cyberspace decentralize or centralize these activities?
- How can the City better connect its cultural resources throughout the neighborhoods? How can physical planning orient people toward our shared history?

- How can the City design its "edges" – the spaces that serve as boundaries and peripheries – so that all communities develop a real sense of identity and also enjoy access to the whole City?

- What do Boston and surrounding communities need to do to enhance public transit access for all? What new lines and transportation alternatives can bring together the City's many different groups and activities?

- How can Boston develop spaces that accommodate businesses at all phases of their life-cycle – from startup to growth firm to mature industry? How can Boston make sure that business firms stay in the City when they expand their operations and markets?

- What can be done to improve the traffic patterns downtown? What can be done to reduce the burden of cross-town traffic on neighborhoods just outside the urban core?

All members of the Boston community are invited to participate in the development of policy options for these and other issues as part of Boston 400. Please contact Boston 400 for more information.

Jamaica Plain and Mattapan Begin Neighborhood Planning Process

All across the City, Boston 400 has begun to explore a wide range of issues with neighborhood groups to develop visions to guide planning for the next generation. These meetings, which will continue through the spring, explore specific topics and are open to the public.

Each issue of the *Boston 400 Update* will profile the efforts of two or three neighborhoods to share information with the rest of the City. This month's profiles – Jamaica Plain and Mattapan – underscore how diverse neighborhoods share many common concerns.

Jamaica Plain: At recent meetings, residents and merchants explored two fundamental questions: How can we improve the appearance and function of neighborhood business districts? How can we improve access and repair the "broken pieces" of the neighborhood's parks and open spaces?

The early analysis of business districts focused on

February 1998 Calendar

2 Monday

Dorchester - "Improving Transportation Access to Business Districts... and Access to Goods and Services," Bowdoin Street Health Center, 230 Bowdoin Street, 7:00 p.m.

3 Tuesday

Charlestown - "Enhancing Boulevards and Main Streets in Charlestown," Knights of Columbus, 75 West School Street, 7:00 p.m.

4 Wednesday

Allston / Brighton - "Enhancing Streetscape: Developing Options for Allston and Brighton," Jackson Mann Community Center, 500 Cambridge Street, 7:00 p.m.

Rosindale - "Surveying Rosindale for Open Space and Neighborhood Connections," Rosindale Community Center, 6 Cummins Highway, 7:00 p.m.

5 Thursday

South End / Bay Village - "Enhancing Connections to Boston's Waterfront and Other Destinations," United South End Settlements Harriet Tubman House, 566 Columbus Avenue, 6:30 p.m.

West Roxbury - "Developing Comprehensive Approaches to Residential and Business Development, Part II," Roche Family Community Center, 1716 Centre Street, 7:30 p.m.

Related to Boston 400 - Public workshop on the Boston Harbor Islands National Park for the Boston Harbor area community, John F. Kennedy Library, Columbia Point, Dorchester, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Directions: 617-929-4500

9 Monday

Jamaica Plain - "Fostering a Multi-modal Transportation System in Jamaica Plain," Agassiz Community Center, 20 Child Street, 7:00 p.m.

10 Tuesday

Fenway / Kenmore / Audubon Circle - "Parks and Open Spaces as Places for Recreation," with the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, Berklee College of Music, 1140 Boylston Street, 7:00 p.m.

11 Wednesday

Boston 400 Task Force - Monthly meeting open to the public, Boston City Hall (Room 900), 8:00 a.m.

Mission Hill - "Enhancing Mission Hill's Mixed-use and Business Districts," Massachusetts College of Art (Trustee Room), 621 Huntington Avenue, 7:00 p.m.

Your Guide to Planning

The Future of Boston

As part of Boston 400, every community is invited to participate in a series of "focus meetings" to address important topics that are vital to the long-term future of the neighborhoods and the City. These meetings will take place throughout the spring. By the end of the process, each neighborhood will have addressed the complete range of issues that shape the physical makeup of the community. The meeting topics have been formulated in response to the input from earlier community meetings. The topics of future meetings also will arise out of community input. The meetings are scheduled in advance to facilitate booking, advertising, and outreach. Each meeting is open to people from all neighborhoods.

12 Thursday

Back Bay - "Parks and Open Spaces in the Back Bay," with the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, Boston Public Library (Conference Room 5), 666 Boylston Street, 7:00 p.m.

Related to Boston 400 - Public workshop on the Boston Harbor Islands National Park for the Roxbury community, Madison Park Village, 22 Dewitt Drive (corner of Ruggles St.), Roxbury, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Directions: 617-445-1061

14 Saturday

Mattapan - "Improving the Design and Use of Blue Hill Avenue" and "Balancing Institutional Development and Community Needs," special planning workshop, Mattapan Family Service Center, 535 River Street, 8:00 a.m. to noon.

17 Tuesday

Dorchester - "Envisioning the Future Look of Dorchester's Neighborhood Business Districts," with Boston Main Streets Lena Park Community Development Corporation, 150 American Legion Highway, 7:00 p.m.

Roxbury - "Establishing Priorities for a Comprehensive Land Use Plan," Roxbury Community College (Cafeteria - Room 200), 1234 Columbus Avenue, 7:00 p.m.

18 Wednesday

Allston / Brighton - "Improving Access to Business Districts... and Access to Goods and Services," Jackson Mann Community Center, 500 Cambridge Street, 7:00 p.m.

18 Wednesday (continued)

Beacon Hill / West End - "The Edges of Beacon Hill," Boston City Hall (Room 900), 6:00 p.m.

North End / Waterfront - "Parks and Open Spaces in the North End / Waterfront," with the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, Nazzaro Community Center, 30 North Bennett Street, 7:00 p.m.

23 Monday

Jamaica Plain - "Connecting Cultural and Historic Attractions in Jamaica Plain and Beyond," Curtis Hall, 20 South Street, 7:00 p.m.

24 Tuesday

Fenway / Kenmore / Audubon Circle - "Parks and Open Spaces as Components of Environmental Systems," with the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, Berklee College of Music, 1140 Boylston Street, 7:00 p.m.

Charlestown - "Improving Access to Business Districts... and Access to Goods and Services," Knights of Columbus, 75 West School Street, 7:00 p.m.

25 Wednesday

Mission Hill - "Creating a Comprehensive Approach to Transportation in Mission Hill," Massachusetts College of Art (Trustee Room), 621 Huntington Avenue, 7:00 p.m.

Chinatown / Leather District - "Strengthening Access and Connections within the City and Beyond," Asian Community Development Corporation Office, 888 Washington Street, 6:00 p.m.

26 Thursday

East Boston - "What Works...and What Doesn't: Taking an Inventory of East Boston's Challenges and Opportunities," Harborside Community Center, 312 Border Street, 7:00 p.m.

Hyde Park - "Improving Access to Business Districts... and Access to Goods and Services," Hyde Park Community Center, 1179 River Street, 7:00 p.m.

South End / Bay Village - "South End Planning Priorities for the Next Generation," United South End Settlements Harriet Tubman House, 566 Columbus Avenue, 6:30 p.m.

28 Saturday

Mattapan - "Blue Hill Avenue as a Gateway and Corridor," Mattapan Family Service Center, 535 River Street, 8:00 a.m.

Lowell Challenges Bostonians To See Pittsburgh's Approach

Stanley Lowell, Director of the Pittsburgh Housing Authority, delivered the closing address of The Boston 400 Forum in December 1997, and invited Boston planners to come to his city to study its approach to inner-city revitalization.

Lowell, a leading figure in the historic preservation movement in the U.S., has worked for years to devise ways to save not only historic buildings but whole neighborhoods, including the Manchester neighborhood of Pittsburgh.

Over the years, Lowell has hosted many visitors who travel to Pittsburgh to learn how to bring together movements for preservation, neighborhood renewal, public housing, and development of mixed-use neighborhoods. Historic Massachusetts, a statewide preservation group, has sent its employees to Pittsburgh to learn Lowell's

approach.

At his December address, entitled "Preserving and Developing the City: Creating a New Direction for Boston," Lowell challenged Boston to revitalize areas of the City that suffer from poverty, crime, and other social ills. That challenge, he said, requires hard work to assemble coalitions and to develop plans that are viable economically and socially.

"What's the deal?" is Lowell's slogan – and challenge. Every planning effort needs a detailed plan, a wide range of partners, fallback scenarios, and patience. Bankers, business people, government officials, community groups, and preservationists all need to be included in the deal.

Lowell challenged Boston's neighborhood activists to develop a citywide agenda and to recognize the ways that one neighborhood's fortunes affect another's.

Jamaica Plain and Mattapan Hold Focus Meetings with Boston 400

continued from page 1

Centre Street, Hyde Square and Five Corners, Washington Street, South Street, Forest Hills, and Jackson Square. Participants applauded the economic and cultural diversity of these districts, and expressed confidence that they offered a strong foundation for future development.

The major problem with these areas is a sense of "disconnectedness." Sidewalks do not always provide a seamless path. Storefronts are a jumble, often presenting an attractive face to the community but sometimes not. Major focal points and historic buildings do not adequately convey a sense of neighborhood identity. The districts lack basic "legibility" – that is, it is not always clear how the districts relate to nearby districts, T stops, park spaces, and public buildings. And there are too few amenities, like places to sit and get shelter from the weather.

Automobile traffic exacerbates these problems. Traffic patterns are often confusing for drivers and pedestrians alike. Congestion at key intersections – especially on Centre Street – makes movement difficult. Start-and-stop traffic and commuter traffic undermines the sense of pedestrian ease and safety.

Many of the same themes emerged in the discussion about parks and open spaces. Improving connections to Jamaica Pond and the Arnold Arboretum were two major priorities. The first critical "broken piece" is the Arborway, where rapid auto traffic makes pedestrian access dangerous. Another difficult connection is between the Forest Hills T stop and both the Arboretum and Franklin Park. In addition, citizens suggested better connections between Jackson and Egleston Squares and the existing parks.

Mattapan: Enhancing Blue Hill Avenue as a "gateway" to Boston – and creating a streetscape that knits together diverse elements of the community – emerged as the major themes of the early meetings in Mattapan.

Residents and merchants argued that the bridge from Milton into Mattapan provides a dramatic entrance into the City, but the entrance needs to be enhanced. Improvements to Mattapan Square and development of the Neponset River as a recreational space could create a sense of excitement for people entering the City.

Blue Hill Avenue is the "spine" of the neighborhood and requires streetscape improvements from the Milton line north toward Franklin Park and beyond. Blue Hill Avenue offers many important economic, cultural, and environmental attractions, but they tend to be fragmented. Boston 400's effort to improve Blue Hill can build on existing City efforts to revitalize the area.

Mattapan community members strongly expressed the desire to improve existing open spaces. At one January meeting, the group discussed how to build on the existing master plan for the Neponset River Greenway. The group has also discussed the need to enhance existing green spaces—like the Almont Street Playground—through improvements in design and accessibility.

The Department of Parks and Recreation, required by state law to produce a five-year plan by the end of 1998, is working with Boston 400 on the planning process. Parks officials will attend all meetings that address open space.

Roxbury To Begin Planning Workshops

The Roxbury community will join with Boston 400 and the Roxbury Neighborhood Council to begin a grassroots effort to develop a comprehensive land-use plan. The initial meeting will focus on developing priorities for physical planning and set the agenda for a comprehensive plan. The meeting will take place Tuesday, February 17, at Roxbury Community College's Cafeteria (Room 200), at 7 p.m. The Roxbury community is invited to participate.



Boston Redevelopment Authority
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Boston, Massachusetts 02201

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Quote, Unquote

"If you're going to be involved in preservation in inner-city neighborhoods, people are going to ask you why. Have your goals clear. Early on, it became very apparent to us that we needed to have our own marketing pitch for our neighborhood. It's funny how everyone wants to market your neighborhood but you. This was our pitch: "We live in Manchester. Some of us are old, some of us are young. Some of us are black, some of us are white. Some of us are poor, a few may even be rich. But we all have one thing in common: We like it here." That's affirming ourselves in our own community, and we need to say that over and over again..."

"Why can't we turn awful buildings into facilities that are sensitive to our neighborhoods? Why can't we do clean-up and maintenance programs with the youth in our neighborhood? Why can't we hire them to take care of these places? Why can't we look them in the face and say, 'This is a beautiful neighborhood. This is our home. Nobody's going to take care of it unless we take care of it, and that's what we are going to do?'"

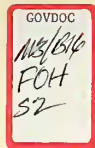
Excerpt from "Preserving and Developing the City: Creating a New Direction for Boston," a Boston 400 Forum lecture by Stanley Lowe, Director of the Pittsburgh Housing Authority, delivered Wednesday, December 10, 1997, at Faneuil Hall, Boston, Massachusetts.

Contact Us

Please contact us if you have any questions or comments about the Boston 400 process or the *Boston 400 Update*.

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30 - 2030

Boston 400 UPDATE

Boston 400: The City's Comprehensive Planning Initiative

FEB 24 1998

January 1998

Welcome to the *Boston 400 Update*

The *Boston 400 Update*, a newsletter of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, provides information about the latest Boston 400 activities for people who want to get involved in the City's long-term planning initiative. *Update* includes a comprehensive calendar of community meetings, news briefs, neighborhood and task force activities, and information about related planning issues. More extensive information can be found on the Boston 400 web site. To get on the *Update* mailing list, send names and addresses to the addresses noted on page 4.

Boston 400 Community Planning Enters Second Phase of Process

The Boston 400 comprehensive planning process, initiated by Mayor Thomas M. Menino, has entered its second phase with a series of neighborhood work sessions that focus on specific topics.

Boston 400 conducted initial open public meetings in 16 of the City's 18 neighborhoods from September to November of last year. A meeting in the South End has been rescheduled for later this month. The South Boston process will begin at the conclusion of public processes for the South Boston Seaport Public Realm Plan.

Several neighborhoods already have begun Phase 2 of the neighborhood planning process. In Phase 2, members of the neighborhoods gather to address specific concerns, like traffic, mass transit, parks and open spaces, commercial districts, business and jobs development, and cultural resources.

Everyone in the City is invited to participate in the Boston 400 process at any time. All meetings and topics will be advertised in the *Boston 400 Update* and listed in the calendar sections of community newspapers. You are also invited to convey your ideas about citywide planning directly to the BRA.

Residents and other members of the neighborhoods embraced the concept of developing a comprehensive approach to planning. They agreed that such a plan should begin with neighborhood processes.

They also agreed that Boston 400 could play a useful role by building upon and connecting planning initiatives completed by the neighborhoods or currently underway. Organizations like Urban Edge, the Fenway Alliance, the Neponset Greenway Alliance and the Roxbury Neighborhood Council, to name only a few, should play

a vital role in developing a larger vision for the City and its neighborhoods.

A number of issues were raised in the neighborhood meetings. The most common theme was the need to foster a greater sense of "place" in the neighborhoods and business districts. The best way to foster a sense of place is to enhance the public realm — the spaces that all of the members of a community share in common. By enhancing these spaces, we will have a more supportive base for our social and economic endeavors.

Residents and merchants expressed a desire to develop initiatives that would:

- Link together a wide range of cultural and historic resources, educational facilities, vibrant commercial spaces and open spaces and recreational facilities.
- Control automobile use and parking and enhance public transit.
- Develop special places in the neighborhoods for youth to gather for social activities.
- Focus on the Boston Harbor and the Harbor Islands as a place in the City that has the greatest potential to be the common ground for residents of all racial and ethnic backgrounds to gather and visit for recreational, educational, and cultural activities.
- Promote mixed-use development wherever possible and appropriate to create 24-hour life.
- Fix the "broken pieces" of the City's system of parks and open spaces.
- Make major roads into more attractive "boulevards" that are pleasant and comprehensible for residents and visitors alike.
- Develop comprehensive strategies to better incorporate the economic and social benefits of the major

continued on page 3

January 1998 Calendar

5 Monday

Jamaica Plain — "Parks and Open Spaces in Jamaica Plain: An Overview of Current Conditions and Challenges." Curtis Hall Community Center, 20 South Street, 7 p.m. Next meeting January 20.

8 Thursday

Back Bay — "Confronting Disneyfication and Promoting Diversity in Back Bay." Boston Architectural Center, 320 Newbury Street, 7 p.m. Next meeting: January 22.

West Roxbury — "Developing Comprehensive Approaches to Residential and Business Development, Part I." Roche Family Community Center, 1716 Centre Street, 7 p.m. Next meeting date: February 5.

10 Saturday

Mattapan — "Enhancing the Neponset River Corridor as a Recreational and Environmental Resource." Mattapan Community Health Center, 1425 Blue Hill Avenue, 8 a.m. Next meeting date: January 31.

12 Monday

Dorchester — "Enhancing the Physical Image and Appearance of Dorchester's Commercial Districts." Citizens' Bank, 572 Columbia Road, 7 p.m. Next meeting date: February 2.

13 Tuesday

Fenway/Kenmore/Audubon Circle — "Creating a Balance Between Residential, Institutional, and Commercial Activities." open community meeting, Berklee College of Music (Room 2-E), 1140 Boylston Street, 7 p.m. Next meeting date: January 27.

14 Wednesday

Boston 400 Task Force — Monthly meeting open to the public, Room 900, Boston City Hall, 8 a.m. Next meeting will be on February 11, same time and place.

Mission Hill — "Enhancing Identity by Improving Connections Between the Pieces of Mission Hill." Mission Church, 1545 Tremont Street, 7 p.m. Next meeting date: January 28.

Beacon Hill/West End — "Enhancing Cambridge Street as a Connection Between Beacon Hill and the West End." Hill House, 74 Joy Street, 7 p.m. Next meeting date: February 4.

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14 Wed. (cont'd)

North End/Waterfront — "Enhancing Pedestrian Access With Nearby Neighborhoods and Attractions." Nazzaro Community Center, 30 North Bennett Street, 7 p.m. Next meeting date: January 28.

Roslindale — "Strengthening Connections to Parks and Open Spaces." Sons of Italy, 30 Birch Street, 7 p.m. Next meeting: February 4.

15 Thursday

Chinatown — "Priorities for Improving Chinatown's Physical Makeup." Asian Community Development Corporation Office, 888 Washington Street, 6 p.m. Next meeting date: February 19.

South End — "Introducing Boston 400 to the South End." Explanation of the goals of long-term planning, invite community participation, and seek ideas on how to conduct follow-up meetings, Boston Center for the Arts, 539 Tremont Street, 7 p.m. Next meeting date: February 5.

19 Monday

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

20 Tuesday

Allston/Brighton — "Parks and Open Spaces in Allston-Brighton." Jackson Mann Community Center, 500 Cambridge Street, 7 p.m. Next meeting date: February 3.

Leather District — "Introducing Boston 400 to the Leather District." Explanation of the goals of long-term planning, invite community participation, and seek ideas on how to conduct follow-up meetings, Quincy School Community Center, 885 Washington Street, 6:30 p.m.

22 Thursday

Back Bay — "Making the Connection: How Back Bay Relates to Nearby Neighborhoods." Boston Public Library, 666 Boylston Street, 7 p.m. Next meeting date: Thursday February 5.

Hyde Park — "Transportation for a More Livable Hyde Park." Hyde Park Community Center, 1179 River Street, 7 p.m. Next meeting date: February 12.

26 Monday

Jamaica Plain — "Parks and Open Spaces in Jamaica Plain: Improving Access for Residents and Visitors." Jamaica Plain Community Center at Curtis Hall, 20 South Street, 7:00 p.m. Next meeting date: February 9.

27 Tuesday

Fenway/Kenmore/Audubon Circle — "Improving Fenway/Kenmore/Audubon Circle's Transitional Spaces." open community meeting, Berklee College of Music, 1140 Boylston Street, 7 p.m. Next meeting date: February 10.

28 Wednesday

Mission Hill — "Enhancing Public Spaces in Mission Hill." Mission Church, 1545 Tremont Street, 7 p.m. Next meeting date: February 11.

North End/Waterfront — "Retaining the Historic Character of the North End/Waterfront." Nazzaro Community Center, 30 North Bennett Street, 7 p.m. Next meeting date: February 11.

31 Saturday

Mattapan — "Making Mattapan's Spaces Safe and Accessible for All." Mattapan Community Health Center, 1425 Blue Hill Avenue, 8 a.m. Next meeting date: February 14.

Boston 400 Enters Phase 2

continued from page 1

institutions such as universities and hospitals, into the lives of neighborhood residents.

- Enhance public spaces for families and young people.
- Control the negative effects of large-scale development.
- Create a better urban design and use context for development of vacant lots and buildings.
- Coordinate the planning and implementation activities of City, state, regional governmental entities relating to development, infrastructure and services.

Task Force Addresses Issues Raised in Community Meetings

The Boston 400 Task Force – a diverse group of leaders in architecture and planning, the environment, community development, business, culture, and the arts – has begun to develop analyses and options to deal with problems identified at Boston 400 community meetings.

The Task Force, appointed by Mayor Thomas M. Menino last spring, has met six times to discuss the challenges of planning Boston for the next generation.

All Task Force meetings are open to the public. The next Task Force meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 28 at 8 a.m. in Room 900 of Boston City Hall.

Task Force members agree that maintaining Boston's historic character, promoting dynamic new industries, and maintaining the livable character of Boston are some of the major challenges facing Boston 400.

To pursue these goals, Task Force members have begun to volunteer to analyze specific planning challenges. A full report of these activities will appear in the February *Boston 400 Update*.

Earlier in the year, Task Force members heard reports on major issues facing the planning process.

Antonio DiMambro, a prominent Boston architect, presented an overview of other citywide planning efforts in the U.S. and Europe. DiMambro, a Task Force member, argued that Boston 400 should exploit the City's natural resources, especially the waterfront.

Paul Watanabe of the University of Massachusetts at Boston presented a report on the changing demographics of Boston. Watanabe said Boston 400 should think about how physical planning can bridge the gaps between different racial and ethnic groups.

Pittsburgh Preservationist Challenges Boston 400 Plan

Stanley Lowe, Director of the Pittsburgh Housing Authority and a national leader in the preservationist movement, closed the Boston 400 Forum series with a challenge to "think outside the box" and bring together different elements of the community.

Lowe described efforts to revive the Manchester neighborhood of Pittsburgh. The key to the effort, he said, was getting community groups to get together and developing a detailed plan that would entice banks and other institutions to invest in the area.

A complete report on Lowe's address will appear in the next issue of the *Boston 400 Update*.

Related to Boston 400 . . .

BRA Releases New Vision For South Boston Seaport

On November 25, 1997, Mayor Thomas M. Menino and Thomas N. O'Brien, the Director of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, issued an interim report on a comprehensive plan for development of the South Boston Seaport.

The plan is a public realm plan for what Mayor Menino called the "last frontier" of Boston, the 1,000-acre area along and leading to the Fort Point Channel and South Boston waterfronts.

Because the neighborhood was originally developed with just a few roads and buildings, it represents an unparalleled opportunity to develop new spaces for sea-based industries, residential, office and hotel development, the new Convention Center, public spaces for residents and visitors, and expansion of Harborwalk and water transit.

Planning work was conducted in cooperation with the South Boston Waterfront Committee, a 21-member group appointed by Mayor Menino. The group is chaired by Ken Sinkiewicz, a South Boston resident.

At a South Boston community-wide meeting on December 2, attended by over 200 people, BRA Director O'Brien underscored the importance of having a plan to avoid helter-skelter development. He said that the master plan provides a foundation that ensures that future development will benefit the community as a whole, and invited public review and response to the interim report.

For more details about the interim report on the South Boston Seaport, call the BRA at 617-722-4300.

Quote, Unquote

"Let me say right at the outset how very impressed I am by Boston 400 and how glad I am that it exists. . . . The kinds of things you're committed to—enhancing the city's public realm, strengthening economic opportunity, providing a strong social support structure and finding new ways to meet the residents' need for a vibrant civic life—these are the things that every city needs. I suppose that means that every American city . . . needs an organization like Boston 400, and I commend Mayor Menino for his vision and foresight in creating it. . . .

"*Livability* is in short supply in too many of the traditional downtowns and older residential neighborhoods that we've neglected so callously in recent decades. And we're beginning to recognize that livability isn't just a warm-and-fuzzy, Hallmark-card sentiment. In an increasingly competitive global marketplace, livability is the factor that will determine which communities thrive and which ones wither. Robert Solow, Nobel Prize-winning economist at MIT, puts it this way: 'Livability is not some middle-class luxury. It is an economic imperative.'"

Excerpt from "Transportation and the Livable City," a Boston 400 Forum lecture by Richard Moe, President, National Trust for Historic Preservation, delivered Wednesday, November 5, 1997, at Faneuil Hall, Boston, Massachusetts. For a copy of the full transcript, please contact the Boston Redevelopment Authority (see below).

Contact Us

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See the calendar on page 2 for information about your neighborhood's meetings.